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Allana House
4, Allana Road
Colaba
Mumbai - 400 005.

Ph.: 287 44 55
Fax : 204 4821
E-mail : allanabb@bom2.vsnl.net.in

In Focus

SHANMUKHA

*At the close of its twentyfourth year **SHANMUKHA** offers a choice bouquet of explorations.*

Ragamalika as a genre of Compositions is explored with a view to highlighting the very evolution and development of Karnatak music.

A Scholar analyses the Dasavathara Ragamalika of Muthuswamy Dikshitar.

What was the status of women in Tyagaraja's Compositions? Read a connoisseur's "Objective mastery of a complete poet".

An exploration of the pre-Trinity period brings forth the mystic bard of Oothukkadu as the preceptor of the Trintity in more ways than one.

An enlightening search of Syama Sastri's Kritis also forms part of this issue.

*Was Sarang the Adi Raga of natural effulgence? The 'Sangeet Marthand' thought so. **SHANMUKHA** culls out the write-up from its archives.*

A tribute long overdue to that "Lone Tower" that stood out among the giant - contemporaries in Hindustani Music - Ustad Amir Khan - finds a prime place.

From the corridors of history a great conductor informed the world of the Eastern influence on Western Music.

And the status of Sahitya in Karnatak Music, a perennial topic for discussion, "as an easy path of Bhakti Yoga towards self-realisation;" Season and time elements in Indian Music; the role that notation plays in 'cultivating' Manodharma add food for thought.

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"A LONE TOWER" By Dr. Sulochana Rajendran

Hazarat Turakman..... Slow and steady the Darbari Kanhara unfolds itself, from the bass, in a soulful mellifluity, charged with all power and pliance the voice could muster. The lyrics floats the same, but the melody dives deep, gradually and gracefully scans the notes and their nuances in a relaxed Vilambit over two and a half Saptaks (octaves) and soars high with a translucent thrust. It takes nearly 25 minutes to emerge from the Mandra Saptak (the bass). The power and resonance of the voice captivates the listeners. Time constraint bothers none save the organisers who are on tender hooks.

'Would he complete the Khayal on time or embarrass us? - they seem to worry. For it was a very prestigious programme organised as part of week-long international Music Conference. The Ustads and Vidwans who were scheduled to perform in the evenings had a hectic programme in the morning in the seminar discussing and exchanging views and examining subjects pertaining to promotion of musical understanding, appreciation on a worldwide basis.

Showing least sign of fatigue or strain the Ustad lost himself in the Aradhana of the Raag Devata, gyrating through the Khayal Bandish in Vilambit, Madhya Laya and Drut and as if reminded of his commitment, the time schedule, he rounded off with a quicky Tarana, just overstepping the limit by a few minutes.

Who was the Ustad, who was lost in music, yet not unaware of his time-slot and responsibility?

None other than Ustad Amir Khan, a great visionary and a musician whose perception of musical enunciation was exceptionally original and amazingly restrained. He towered among his contemporaries, evolving a style of his own, call it a Gharana if you will. He listened to the top-notchers of his time with great reverence but would not subscribe to any particular Gharana. His was "a style of time-Swara Continuum", to quote a conferrer.

Like his towering figure and the dignity he exuded, his voice too had a rare power and resonance. Having an astonishingly wide range, his voice reflected a rare blend of vitality and sensitivity which he used with consummate skill projecting a style that was clear in approach and unostentatious in exposition. Very few vocalists would elaborate in the bass as Amir Khan did. He believed in bass providing a firm base for a substantive take-off of a Raga elaboration and grand picturisation. Also the Vilambit in bass was an ideal take-off point for building monumental edifice. It was an area of deep contemplation, and one could discipline one's mind and melody, one's imagination and delineation once this contemplation was ensured.

Unlike many of the musicians who believed in 'absolute' freedom, Amir Khan like a true classicist, understood the essence of 'freedom within form', 'freedom with restraint'. His creative instincts never failed him. On the contrary, he was in his best with his contemplative mood when sung with built-in rhythm which he felt disciplined the melody.

He seemed to have had precise ideal about accompaniment and forms of compositions. His substantive pauses in notes, in an explorative mood-evoking move and the slow-Ghathra' stride invariably evoked a serenity and equipoise. His Alap and Khayal Bhadat - was slow and steady exploring the nuancic potential of each note and building up from note to note. When he touched just the next higher note, in a Meend especially, it would sound as if they were far apart. Such an impression of expansiveness it brought on to the build up. He excelled in his bass build up and it took quite a long time, say, about 30 to 40 minutes before he moved on from Mandra to Madhya Saptak. But not a moment of monotony would creep in in his enunciation. Once he took up the Taan - weaving, the patterns gushed forth in crystallised swiftness.

Often one used to wonder, why Ustad Amir Khan took so much time in Vilambit and gave the Drut a quick treatment. Between Vilambit and Drut, the Ustad made distinct formulations. The two should reflect their distinct qualities, he used to say. Where a Vilambit should be contemplative, deeply explorative in a relaxed mood, Drut should display the crisp, musical vocabulary, the energetic, spirited enunciation. His fast Taans were hence envy of many of his contemporaries. "The virtuosity of the last portion of his recital would fill anyone with wonder that the same singer could have an equal mastery of the two styles," remarked a connoisseur. And this justifies the Ustad's presentation of Khayal in Darbari Kanhara referred to in the beginning within the given timeslot.

For such a style of enunciation, the Ustad considered Sarangi to be more an impediment than an aid and he is said to have gently done away with this stringed support for his recital. For all that matters he was a son of a Sarangia, Ustad Shamir Khan of Indore.

In the Indore Gharana that he enunciated, Tarana had an individuality of its own in the scheme of repertoire. In fact, he added a new facet to it and elevated its status.

To the 'Jati' syllables, he added Persian couplets so as to give it an original flavour as conceived by Amir Khusro. Tarana was oblation to Allah, he believed, and he did not leave it as a mere 'Ta-dhim - Tarana - dhim' syllabic - oriented form of composition. One might add, that Amir Khan's Tarana had the semblance of its Karnatak equivalent, Tillana, which has a Charana stance comprising a couple of stances in praise of the Lord. His Tarana in Megh, Hamsadhvani and Darbari are popular.

Another significant characteristic feature of Amir Khan's style was his Sargam-singing. Adapted from the southern system Sargam-improvisation in 'Hindustani' intonation could never match the Swaraprasthara practised in South. But Amir Khan was an exception. In intonation, in tempo and in weaving patterns of intricacies, Amir Khan well emulated the southern pattern and, one may say, he

even excelled it making it his own individual style.

He was not highly educated, but he moved in high society, highly respected for his musical prowess, for his simplicity and for easy accessibility.

On his sudden death in early 1974 in a road accident a connoisseur wrote :

"Meeting him (Amir Khan) was a treat. He exuded charm and dignity but never snobbishness. He was loved and respected by organisers, music lovers and musicians alike and his death has been a rude shock to all of them. His death has removed from the world of music a colossus who was his own example and who widowed music. Such men are sent by God for the good of Humanity.

Padma Bhushan Amir Khan never encouraged his disciples to imitate him. Both his contemplative Vilambit and the highly brisk-paced, Drut were not only difficult to reproduce but required a voice texture that had the power and resonance Amir Khan had - a rarity. He believed in each one finding his own individual mode of enunciation. Each had to go through intensive training, but over and above there should be an instinctive urge for listening and practice and channel one's own presentation. Though he belonged in name to Indore Gharana, he had imbibed the best of Kirana, Agra and Jaipur and followed a style that uniquely represented a consummate blend of Indore and Kirana schools. To him Classical music was not only to "please and surprise but to soothe and elevate the mind". And he followed his principle to the end.

How would you estimate Ustad Amir Khan, the Man? Here is one from a rare quarter - from a son. Nothing could be better than this, published in Sur Singar Souvenir.

Reminisces his elder son Ekram Ahmed Khan who had settled in Montreal after graduating in Chemical Engineering and who used to meet his father regularly :

I was sitting in my Toronto Head Office discussing the Economics of a new plant in Calgary when I was called out to take a long distance call in the adjacent office. It was Lessa, my Secretary at Montreal - "Your father died in a car accident, today, in Calcutta". Within 96 hours I was standing in front of Khansaheb's grave at Gore Gariban Quabassan with tears in my eyes.

Although many articles have been written about Khansaheb's music, comparatively few have been devoted to Ustad Amir Khan - THE MAN. Suffice it to say as far as his music is concerned, that with his death ended a brilliant era of Indian Classical vocal music.

Khan - the Man

Khansaheb was a "SUFİ" in the true sense of the word. A Man without any specific religious ties; a man totally devoted to oneness of mankind - a true citizen of the World. The words of his 1958 composition bear testimony to his convictions.

Laaj Rakh Lijyo Moree
Saheb, Sattar, Nirankar, Jay Ke Dasta;
Laaj Rak Lijyo Moree.
'Too Raheem Ram Toohi
Teree Maya Apram Pal
Mohe Tore Karam Pe Aadhar
Jaag Ke Daata,
Laaj Rakh Lijyo Moree.

Khansaheb did not have formal schooling, however, through his own perseverance he mastered Urdu, Hindi, Persian & basic Sanskrit. In the late forties he developed a taste for the writings of Maulana Niaz Fatehpuri who questioned the then current version of Judo-Christian - Islamic Scriptures. This led Khansaheb's Muslim friends to call him a heretic, at times. However, this exposure to the higher form of Urdu literature and an inquisitive mind led to his involvement in the Persian literature and consequently to Amir Khusro's writings. His "TARANA" research was a direct result of this involvement. Maulana's writings along with further study of the writings of Guru Nanak, Vivekananda, Ramakrishna and close friendship with Narayan Swami of Calcutta led to his unique blend of Sufism. Of course, he used music to put finishing touches to his convictions. Although he rarely ever performed the ritual of Namaz, the name of Allah was always on his lips even when he had his "not so infrequent" shots of scotch!

Khansaheb was simplicity personified. He was unassuming and always adjusted himself to his environment - be it the highest social circle or a Majlis of unemployed amateur poets. One did not fully realise the greatness of the man because of his humble nature. He always left one with a memorable experience of having heard his music or better still having chatted with him. A good many people all over the world would now cherish those memories.

During Khansaheb's first sojourn in Bombay. In the late thirties, he became a close friend of the late Amanat Khan. Khan Saheb always maintained that had Amanat Khan been alive today, he would

have been his confrere in the world of music. Amongst the elder maestros of music Khansaheb was intensely devoted to Rajab Ali Khan of Dewas and Aman Ali Khan of Bhandi Bazar. He also studied the styles of Belre Waheed Khan and Abdul Karim Khan and amalgamated the essence of the styles of the four maestros with his own intellectual approach to music and conceived what is now known as the Indore Gharana of music.

Khansaheb was extremely soft-hearted and naive about business matters. Quite a few of his so-called delvings in the econo-fesco field strained or depleted his limited financial resources. He never looked back on these failure and, like his music, looked for new horizons in the business world. A trivial success brought glee to his heart and he wound up writing pages after pages to me on his successful strategy. Of-course he never wrote about his failures, I always found that out from his friends.

While he was teaching at the State University of New York at New Paltz in 1969, he implanted not only the seeds of his music among his students but also left behind the legacy of his Sufi philosophy. I hardly ever got a chance to be alone with him. His apartment at New Paltz had a continuous flux of students, professors, musicians etc. Amongst them was a professor of Mathematics by the name of John Hackett. He followed Khansaheb like a shadow, mastered the slow Jhoomra Taal in 56 matras. I could see him counting on his fingers when Khansaheb was performing at New York Indian High Commission on the occasion of Ghalib's centenary celebration. Khansaheb's American friends would not only miss his music but his crowning contribution to their understanding of "AN INSAAN" from his philosophical viewpoint. Many a social event in Tokyo, Honolulu, San Francisco, New York and Montreal would be cancelled in the second quarters of 1974 because Khansaheb is no longer there to participate during his concert cum teaching tour of Japan and America.

Khansaheb had a keen sense of humour and he derived utmost pleasure from the simplest incidence. On one long week end I drove to New Paltz from Montreal, picked Khansaheb and started back for Montreal. The University had an Easter break and Khansaheb was going to spend a week with me at Montreal. The Adorandac Parkway between Montreal and New York is one of the most scenic highways in North America. The maple and the fir are in full bloom along the highway and the mountains with their valleys present a panoramic view. Khansaheb was enraptured by the scene and decided he wanted to drive. Of course, as usual, he did not have his driving

permit with him. I looked around and seeing sparse traffic, let him have the wheel after warning him about the speed limit being 70 M.P.H. He kept just around 70 for about half an hour. Subsequently I saw a Patrol car coming behind us. I asked him to stop and let me drive as I did not want any hassle with the cops. Within 15 minutes I was stopped by a red flashing patrol car and ticketed \$20 for doing 80 M.H.P. The moment the cop left us he

burst out in a crescendo of laughter, the like of which I had never seen. This was his 'joie de vivre'. Since then he always chided me about my 'gouté' for driving.

What a pity he left us when the world was fully savouring the man and his music, Saraswati is spellbound.

Indore and Amir Khan

(As Evaluated by Vamanrao H. Deshpande in "Indian Musical Traditions")

The slow-tempo Khayal of Indore has "the languor of unfinished sleep, ready to relapse and yet vaguely thinking thoughts of activity of the approaching day-time". This is because the Indore Gharana originated in the 'Merkhand' style of the 'Bhendibazar' Gharana (a locality in Mumbai where musicians of Indore Gharana migrated during the first quarter of this century). The Merkhand style, known for its intrinsic laya permutations and combinations in speed, had a choreographic approach to music, i.e., conveyed the sprightly feel of the dance movements in music. However, it was greatly influenced by the Alapi of the renowned Vahid Khan of Kirana Gharana, whose music "paid close attention to the chastity of the Swara intonation and accentuated its richly soporific effect."

Amir Khan, though not a disciple of Vahid Khan assimilated 'the colour and spirit of his style to such an extent that even Vahid Khan felt entirely pleased and blessed Amir Khan with the words: "Long shall my music live in you after I am gone."

So profound was the influence that often Amir Khan's Vilambit Khayal sounded a replica of Vahid Khan's and there seemed to be no semblance of the 'dance conception' of his Gharana.

There was a deep serenity, an intoxicating charm, the whole concentration being on tonal patterns of Alapi. In such rendition as the structural forms of the composition were likely to be treated with indifference the selection of Ragas was such that highlighted Alap segment. Hence his choice of Darbari, Malkauns, Todi, Multani etc.

But when Amir Khan entered the Madhya Laya - Drut phases he projected the 'dance concept', so characteristic of his Gharana.

Another supreme quality of Amir Khan was his aversion to dazzle and showmanship. He even shunned Jugalbandis. He could never be enticed into a Jugalbandi on account of its popularity or "listeners acclaim". "He proved beyond doubt that chaste, refined music does not lack listener response. He never even sings a 'Thumri, and in fact never felt the need of singing one. Amir Khan is the only ray of hope in the surrounding darkness."

RAGAMALIKA

By Dr. M. Hariharan & Dr. Gowri Kuppaswamy

Ragamalika denotes a genre of musical compositions which are couched in a series of Ragas instead of the same Raga throughout. It represents the composer's search for novel patterns and styles of musical expression and the endeavour to achieve variety through melodic contrasts within the same piece.

Ragamalikas are lovely attractive enjoyable concert pieces possessing both a Lakshana and Lakshya value. The change over to a new Raga at each stage sustains the listener's interest from beginning to end. Within the same piece a fine picture of a multiplicity of melodies is portrayed. In view of the presence of Angas in different Ragas these compositions are found to evoke greater appeal.

Ragamalika literally means a garland of Ragas or in other words a string of melodies. This embellished musical form was earlier known as Ragakadambakam. Flower garlands are of two categories - those in which a single variety of flower is used, throughout and those in which a plurality of flower types is employed. The latter is known as Kadambam in Tamil. The term Ragakadambakam thus clearly brings out the use of different Ragas in Ragamalika composition.

Raga Kadambam

Naturally the concept of Ragamalika is as old as that of Raga itself. In the history of Indian music Matanga is the earliest musicologist to refer to Raga as a distinct melodic entity; in his *Brihaddesi* he refers to certain Desi Prabandhas as compositions set to a series of Ragas. During the medieval period Prabandhas with their Angas set to different Ragas and Talas came to be known as Ragakadambakas; essentially these are Ragatalamalikas. In his *Sangitaratnakara* Sarangadeva mentions various Ragakadambakas such as Svastika, Nandyavarta etc. These are, in fact, the progenitors of the present day Ragamalikas.

In the course of its development from the Ragakadambaka Prabandha to its present form, Ragamalika has undergone many vicissitudes and imbibed diverse patterns such as with and with-

out Raga mudra deftly woven into the Sahitya fabric, Chittasvara, and Sahitya segments for the Chittasvara. The inclusion of these embellishments denotes distinct landmarks in the evolution of this musical form and serves to enhance the melodic excellence of the composition in a significant measure.

Varied Use

By the term Ragamalika is generally meant a composition belonging to the sphere of Kalpita Sangita set to a specific Tala but different Ragas. However, in Manodharma Sangita Ragamalika refers to a Slokam or Virutham sung usually during the closing stages of a concert in a series of Ragas without being set to a specific time measure. Ragamalika svara designates a string of Kalpana Svaras rendered in a succession of Ragas at the end of a Pallavi exposition. Then there is also the Ragamalika Tanam performed in several Ragas - usually the Ghana Ragas - particularly during a veena performance.

In view of the presence of a large number of Charanas set to manifold Ragas, Ragamalikas are the longest compositions one encounters in Karnatak music. Three is the minimum number of Ragas in a Ragamalika but there is no upper limit. In fact, there are a couple of Ragamalikas each with 72 Ragas and also a Ragatalamalika in 108 Ragas and Talas which we would have occasion to refer to later. Depending upon the number of Ragas different captions are assigned to them, Navarathnamalikas in 9 Ragas are the most numerous but there are also Chaturdasa Ragamalikas in 14 Ragas, Paksha Ragamalikas in 15 Ragas, Sodasa Ragamalika in 16 Ragas, Ashtadasa Ragamalikas in 18 ragas, Nakshatra Ragamalikas in 27 Ragas and so on.

The Sahitya of Ragamalikas is mostly devotional being doxologies on various deities but it can also be on a love theme or in praise of a patron. In a few cases, however, it may pertain to some aspect of music itself; such Ragamalikas are important from the technical point of view underscoring their Lakshana value. A well known example is Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer's Melaragama-

lika which helps in the easy remembrance of the 72 Melaragas and their individual characteristics. In such cases the composer is tied down to the selection of a particular predetermined group of Ragas as well as their sequence. But otherwise he enjoys unfettered freedom both in the choice of the Ragas and the order in which they are presented. In respect of the vast majority of Ragamalikas both these are based on aesthetic considerations. From the standpoint of Bhava and Rasa there must be a naturalness in the sequence of the Ragas. In order to bring out the melodic contrast closely allied Ragas should not be used in succession. Any two contiguous Ragas in a Ragamalika should be melodically distinct and clear. On the other hand, widely divergent Ragas evoking diametrically opposite emotions should also not be employed consecutively.

Raga Mudra

Ragamalikas with sections rendered in different Ragas came to feature the Raga Mudra in the Sahitya in course of time. The introduction of Raga Mudra in art musical compositions emphasises the significance of the Raga factor and ensures the melodic identity. It prescribes the particular Raga for the relevant portion and any change thereof cannot be contemplated under the circumstances. In many cases the Raga Mudra is dexterously woven into the Sahitya framework. Most composers have displayed extreme ingenuity in splitting the words appropriately to arrive at the Raga Mudra.

Ragamalikas usually comprise a Pallavi, Anupallavi and multiple Charanas which are all of the same length or number of Avarthas. The anupallavi may be in the same Raga as the Pallavi or in a different Raga. In the former, the length of the Pallavi and Anupallavi together will be found to be equal to the length of the Charana. There are also a few Ragamalikas without any Anupallavi at all. The music of the constituent parts of the Ragamalika - Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charana - is followed in quite a few cases by an appropriate Chittasvara (solfa passage) in the respective Ragas and this forms an additional decorative Anga in the composition. The appendage of this set svara passage to each section of the Ragamalika adds appreciably to the variety and liveliness of the pieces. In order to facilitate an easy transition from the music of the section to that of the Pallavi, a short Swara passage in the

Pallavi Raga called Makutasvara is introduced in the last Avartha of the Chittasvara. This functions as the connecting link between the music of the Anupallavi and Charanas on the one hand and that of the Pallavi on the other facilitating the smooth transition back to the Pallavi Raga each time. At the end of the composition there is usually a string of full Avartha or half Avartha Svara passages in all the Ragas in the reverse order and this Viloma Chittasvara serves to complete the Ragamalika cycle besides considerably enhancing the melodic beauty of the composition when rendered at the end.

When in the case of some Ragamalikas Sahitya was introduced for the Chittasvara passages adorning the various sections the possible embellishments in this genre of compositions reached the climax. In such Ragamalikas the Sahitya for the Makuta Svara is known as Makuta Sahitya. The Makuta Sahitya in the Pallavi Raga serves as the common conclusion for the ideas contained in the Charanas and naturally leads on to the Sahitya of the Pallavi.

The vast bulk of Ragamalikas in vogue in Karnatak music have the Kriti or Kirtana format but the concept of Ragamalika has invaded other compositional types as well. Thus we have Ragamalika Tana Varnam, Ragamalika Pada Varnam, Ragamalika Jatisvaram, Ragamalika Daru, Ragamalika Suladi, Ragamalika Pallavi, Ragamalika Tarangam, Ragamalika Lavani, Ragamalika Tillana, etc.

Architects of Ragamalika

The Vaggeyakaras who have composed Ragamalikas are limited in number. Among the Musical Trinity neither Tyagaraja nor Syama Sastri has any Ragamalika to his credit and their disciples or members of their families too seem to have rarely attempted composing this musical form. Muthuswami Dikshitar has authored quite a few Ragamalikas and members of the Dikshitar family are among the most prolific creators of this category of musical compositions.

The earliest Vaggeyakara known to have composed Ragamalikas is King Shahaji of Tanjore. Besides a Marathi Ragamalika he has to his credit a Sanskrit verse set to 14 Ragas in praise of his family deity Tyagaraja of Tiruvavur. Though the Sahitya for the different Raga segments in this Chaturdasa Ragamalika

are extremely short they nevertheless carry the Raga Mudra. However, it was Shahaji's junior contemporary, Melattur Virabhadrayya, who must really be regarded as the pioneer composer of this musical form. Both the Ragamalikas ascribed to Virabhadrayya are in Telugu and contain Chittasvaras as well as Raga Mudra. While the one beginning with the word 'Ninnukori' is set to 5 Ragas, the other starting with the phrase 'Naa Mohananguni' comprises 6 Ragas. A point of significance is that Virabhadrayya was the mentor of Muthuswami Dikshitar's father Ramaswami Dikshitar and thereby sowed the seeds for the blossoming of the Dikshitar family into architects of numerous delectable musical compositions in general and Ragamalikas in particular.

Ramaswami Dikshitar has authored several marvellous Ragamalikas - all of them in Telugu. They are characterized by their enormous length and the large number of Ragas used in each of them. While the shortest, 'Samajagami' in praise of Amarasimha Maharaja of Tanjore is set to 19 Ragas, 'Sivamohanasakti' on Goddess Meenakshi of Madurai is in 38 Ragas and 'Manasaveritula' on Lord Venkateswara of Tirupati in 48 Ragas. But Ramaswami Dikshitar's most prodigious composition is his Ragatalamalika 'Natakadi Vidyala' composed in honour of his patron Manali Venkatasubba Reddiar. Incidentally this has also the distinction of being the longest composition in Karnatic Music. It has been set to 108 different Ragas and Talas the names of which have been cleverly introduced in to the particular Sahitya portion. However, as ill luck would have it, only upto the 61st segment of the Ragatalamalika, to be exact, is at present available to us.

In addition to being the author of the *magnum opus*, *Sangita Sampradaya Pradarshini*, which is a priceless Lakshana-Lakshya treatise as well as the authentic storehouse of the compositions of the Dikshitar family in general and of Muthuswami Dikshitar in particular, Ramaswami Dikshitar's great grand nephew, Subbbarama Dikshitar, was also himself a prolific composer of Ragamalikas. He has to his credit as many as eleven Ragamalikas in the Telugu and Tamil languages. These are of varying lengths ranging from the short piece 'Valampumiri' in just 4 Ragas to his longest Raganga Ragamalika 'E Kanakambari' set to

and illustrating the 72 Mela paddhathi propounded by Venkatamakhhi.

Muthuswami Dikshitar himself composed four Ragamalikas, all in the Sanskrit language. Among these only one belongs to his group of compositions on non-Saivaite deities. This is his Dasavartara Ragamalika, 'Madhavamampatu' on Vishnu's ten incarnations. Out of the ten Ragas employed in this Ragamalika, the first five are the Ghana Ragas Nata, Goula, Sri, Varali and Arabhi and the sixth is Kedaram while the last four are the Mangala Ragas, Vasantha, Suruti, Sourashtram and Madhyamavathi. Among his other three Ragamalikas which are on the Saivite deities, 'Simhasanasthite' is on Goddess Lalitamba and 'Purnachandrabimbavadane' is on Goddess Kamalamba of Tiruvavur while his Chaturdasa Ragamalika is on Lord Siva's incarnation as Visvanatha.

Other well known Vaggeyakaras who have each several Ragamalikas to his credit are Svati Tirunal, Manambuchavadi Venkatsubbier, Ponnaiya Pillai, Lalitha Dasar, Muthia Bhagavathar, Papanasam Sivan and Ambujam Krishna. Among those who do not seem to have attempted authoring Ragamalikas figure, besides Tyagaraja and Syama Sastri, Subbaraya Sastri, Venkataramana Bhagavathar, Anayya, Pallavi Gopala Iyer, Mysore Sadasiva Rao, Gopalakrishna Bharathi, Annaswami Sastri, Ramaswami Sivan, Kotisvara Iyer, Mysore Vasudevachar and Jayachamaraja Wodeyar.

In some cases while the Vaggeyakara himself intended his composition to be rendered only in a single Raga, it has attained popularity as a Ragamalika in subsequent periods. A case in point is the Ramanatakam piece 'Enakkunnirupadam' which Arunachala Kavi has composed in Sourashtram but later gained wide currency as a Ragamalika. Similarly the song *Bhavayami Raghuraamam* originally composed by Svathi Thirunal in Saveri has now become well known as a Ragamalika. The Tarangam *Jaya Jaya Gokulabala* of Narayana Thirtha in Kuranji has gained broad appeal as a Ragamalika at the hands of Tiruvottiur Tyagaier. Many Devamamas of the Dasakuta composers of Karnataka as well as several compositions of Subramanya Bharathi are at present popular as Ragamalika.

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DIKSHITAR'S

DASAVATARA RAGAMALIKA

By P.K. Srinivasan B.Sc.

Ragamalika is a kind of composition wherein its Charanas, known as Kandikas are set in different Ragas. Generally Chittasvaras are appended to each Charana with or without a Makuta - i.e., an end piece in the same Raga as that of the Pallavi for a smooth and pleasing change over from one Raga to the other succeeding one. The Chittasvara for the last Charana will cover all the Ragas handled in that particular composition but in a reverse order called 'Vilomakrama', though this is not a must. The beauty of a Ragamalika is further enhanced when the names of the corresponding Ragas are incorporated with ingenuity in the Sahitya itself. This has got a charming effect and at the same time does not keep the listener in suspense as to the identity of the Raga that is sung.

Eminent Vaggeyakaras like Swati Tirunal Maharaja and Muthuswamy Dikshitar have composed brilliant Ragamalikas. But instances are not rare where a composition originally set in a single Raga by the author is converted into a Ragamalika at a later date by musicians. For instance, the once famous Narayana Theertha's *Jaya Jaya Gokulabala* of *Krishna-leela Tharangini* was made a Ragamalika piece starting with Bhairavi, followed by Atana, Kambhoji, Kalyani and ending with Surati, with captivating Chittasvaras having a 'Makuta' set in Bhairavi by Thiruvotriyur Tyagaraja, another Vaggeyakara. So too the Ramayana piece *Bhavayami Raghuramam* of Swathi Tirunal in Saveri Raga was converted into a Ragamalika type. The credit goes to Sangita Kalanidhi Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, but for which the beauty of the entire episode of Ramayana so nicely epitomised by the saintly Maharaja would have been lost. Indeed it has become now a major item in Bharathanatya performance, taking the place of Varnam, as it gives wide scope for Sanchari Bhavas.

Dikshitar's Ragamalikas

Muthuswami Dikshitar has composed few Ragamalikas. Of these *Sri Visvanatham Bhajeham* is the longest one known as "Chaturdasa Bhuvana Roopa Ragamalika", a name given by himself, containing fourteen different Ragas as the title itself indicates. (Earlier to him Sahaji Maharaja of Tanjore had composed one such Ragamalika under the same name consisting of fourteen Ragas.) Now the Dasavathara Ragamalika *Madhavo maam Paathu* in ten different Ragas ranks next to this in length, and is in praise of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu. A detailed study of this will be interesting.

Fine Raga Scheme

A comparison is unavoidable while making an analytical study. In case of *Sri Visvanatham* it appears the fourteen Ragas were chosen at random perhaps to suit incorporating them in the Sahitya (text) for the Ragamudra. The piece *Purna chandra Bhimba* is set in six Ragas all derived from the Sankarabharana Mela. For the composition - *Simhasanasthithay* he has chosen four auspicious Ragas. He has treated the Raga Vasantha also as an auspicious one for he has composed his only Mangalam song in this Raga. But in the Dasavathara Ragamalika he had planned well the Ragas and evolved a fine scheme. He had chosen the Ghana Raga Panchakam viz., Nata, Gowla, Sriraga, Arabhi and Varali Ragas for the first five Kandikas (Charanas). For the end four Charanas he had taken the Mangalakara (auspicious) Ragas of Vasantha, Surati, Sowrashtira and Madyamavathi. One more is required to complete the ten and he had used Kedara, a majestic Raga and had nicely placed it in the middle. As far as the Raga pattern is concerned it can be said that this is the best one.

Salient Features

Another important feature is Raga Mudra. In *Sri Visvanatham* the names of all the fourteen Ragas have been incorporated in the Sahitya and so too in the *Puranachandra* piece. But this Dasavathara Ragamalika is quite conspicuous by the total absence of Raga-Mudra. In the third Charana set in Sri Raga the letter 'Sri' is found in the word *Sridharena*. But this seems to be more coincidental than intentional because the ninth one also starts as *Sri Krishnam*. So it can be safely concluded that Ragamudra has not been adopted in this song.

Another striking feature is that there is no Pallavi-like thing, a refrain, for repeating at the end of each Charana. This entire piece has to be sung continuously without repeating *Madhavomam-Pathu*. Only one verb is there in the case of the other three Ragamalika pieces

and hence it is essential that the Pallavi is repeated for completing the sense. But here the structure of the text differs in the sense that each Charana is having its own verb and complete by itself as can be seen from the table given below. After a run through of all the ten Charanas only, we come to the start for finishing the song.

Vibhakti Pattern

The entire *Sri Visvanatham* piece is set in accusative case only. But in this 'Dasavathara' Ragamalika, Sri Dikshitar has utilised in his characteristic style all the eight Vibhakti cases of Sanskrit from nominative case to the vocative case for the first eight Kandikas. For the last two he has used the accusative case. This is one more reason for singing this composition continuously. Each Charana is a unit by itself as indicated below:

Sr. No.	Charana Text	Vibhakti (Case)	Raga
1.	<i>Madhavo maam paathu</i>	Pratama-Nominative	Nata
2.	<i>Govindam Namami</i>	Dvithiya - Accusative	Gowla
3.	<i>Sridharena Rakshitaha</i>	Thritiya - Instrumental	Sriraga
4.	<i>Narasimhaya Namasthey</i>	Chaturti - Dative	Arabhi
5.	<i>Vaamanaath Anyam na Jaaney</i>	Panchami - Ablative	Varali
6.	<i>Parasuramasya dasoham</i>	Shashti - genitive	Kedara
7.	<i>Ramachandrasvamini Bhaktim</i> Karomi	Sapthami - Locative	Vasantha
8.	<i>Balarama ! maam Kalaya</i>	Sambhodana - Vocative	Surati
9.	<i>Sri Krishnam Bhaja</i>	Dvithiya - Accusative	Sourashtra
10.	<i>Kaliyugavara</i>	Dvithiya - Accusative	Madyamavathi

All the ten Kandikas are well balanced as far as Tala is concerned. The textual portion is of eight Avarta duration and so too the Chittasvara. Even in these, the first halves of four Avartas are in the normal speed while the second halves are in a faster tempo and this applies to both the textual and the Chittasvara sections. Another salient feature is that the endings of these Chittasvaras are such that they lead to the next Raga smoothly.

Unfortunately this has been modified (Vanoli version) to suit repeating *Madhavo mam paathu* as a Pallavi to be sung after each Charana. It should be noted that these Chittasvaras are not terminated with Makuta phrase and there is no Viloma sequence in the end. All these go to confirm that the entire Ragamalika has to be sung one after the other at one stretch. This composition was first published in the *Music Academy Journal* in 1966 (Vol.37) and later on in part 15

of *Sri Dikshitar Kirthanamala* of Vainka Vidwan, A. Sundaram Ayyar known for its authenticity. Further, it was taught under "Isai Marabu" by the AIR Madras Station. In this we find the *Madhavo maam Paathe* is treated as the Pallavi portion and this repeated after each Charana. To aid this the end portions of the Chittasvaras are all modified. Apart from this another error, rather an omission, has crept in it, which is also found in the *M.A. Journal*. The Chittasvara for the third one, (Sri Raga) is having six avartas only i.e., two avartas are missing. The full eight avartas of Chittasvara portion as taken from the *Dikshitar Kirtana Mala* (Part 15) is reproduced for the benefit of the readers.

//R::PMR//RGGRSN//S::RMP//NN
PMPN//
//sRgrsnrsn//pNsnmPnsr//
//gRsnprsnpm//PdnPmrmgrs//

Thus we find this Dasavathara Ragamalika of Muthuswamy Dikshitar unique by itself having special features not found in his other three pieces. It is not heavily loaded with Sahitya; it is simple and easy to understand by all. The Chittasvaras are all enchanting and the Raga scheme a well planned one.

Can Rose Bloom at Night ?

It has become fashion among some Hindustani Vocalists and instrumentalists to pooh-pooh the traditional concept of time-theory that governs the rendition of the Ragas of North India. Perhaps this is also part of 'neo-classicism'. The rationale of this theory - that the intricacies of a given Raga inherently synchronise with the mood appropriate to the time of the day when the Raga is sung or played - has, come down to us from our Shastras and has been vindicated by scholar-musicians like Bhatkhande.

According to maestros like Ravi Shankar, however, the theory (which, incidentally has long been discarded in Karnatak music) is losing its validity in the present day environment where music concerts are mostly held in the brightly-lit, air-conditioned auditoria which, according to him, tend to make the audiences grow less and less time-conscious.

But then, what about the 'biological' clock' which, like the heart, always keeps aware of the time and the season? Happily, the rejection of the time-theory has not made much headway till now. And even Ravi Shankar is himself seen to take due care in choosing his Raga repertoire in conformity with the established concept!

Bhimsen Joshi is, of course, the last word on the controversy. The master-vocalist once silenced a questioner by putting him a counter-question; Can a rose be forced to bloom at night? Then how can our morning Ragas flower into full bloom except during the morning hours?"

- M. N.
(Mirror).

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Women in Tyagaraja's Compositions (Objective Mastery of A Complete Poet)

By N. Rajagopalan

The Bard of Tiruvaiyaru and the most popular of the classical Karnatak Trinity, Tyagaraja had probably to suffer the agony of witnessing ignominious indiscretions that day to be forced to come out with his most vehement censure in *Menu Juchi mosa bokave* (Sarasangi):

'Oh Mind! Do not get deluded by illusory physical appearances of women. If you could only see through their glamorous exterior, you would see nothing but an amalgam of filth, blood, etc., with an alluring cloak on. They carry on their amorous adventures with their eyes which, like sharp weapons, pierce through men's hearts and with their breasts, which like mounds, present a resting place for heads'.

The poet was sure to have been piqued by some despicable amorous Lilas' of a reckless profligate to indent on words alien to his life of a spiritual crusader. Even the name of the Raga is an indication of the content and message of the song. The spouse of Parvati and, later, on her demise, of Kamalambal and father of his only child, Mahalakshmbal could never think of or stoop to castigate all women but encompasses only those guilty of perversions and ignoble conduct. The warning applies to the voluptuous and the prostitute as well as to men of fickle minds. Tyagaraja reveals his mind, though not in such biting terms, in other songs as well to retrieve, reform and reclaim minds with marked proclivity for sex that waver as in :

Manasa Sri Ramuni dayaleka (Mararanjani) wherein he queries whether the mind had got distracted by other women;

Manasu nilpa sakti leka bote (Abhogi), where he poses the ticklish issue of the efficacy of one performing Soma Yaga even as his Dharmapatni (wife) indulges in illicit amours with her paramour and

Enta muddo? Enta sogaso? (Bindumalini), in which he chides pseudo-devotees who stand enslaved by vicious women ensnared by their captivating looks and gives expression to his dismay at their incapacity to seek Divine Beauty comparing such men to milk-cans that cannot appreciate the taste of milk.

Tyagaraja should have been young when he composed *Mivalla gunadosha memi* (Kapi) wherein while warning against the tendency to shift responsibility for one's own faults, he queries how a goldsmith could be held culpable for deficiency in purity when the gold given to him is not of the required carat. Then he pens a challenging query-quite a startling one but atrociously correct-'If one's daughter is not able to stand labour pains, why wrongly blame the son-in-law for it? (Of course, the prevailing conditions then would have justified the shifting of the blame; but still?) Surely, this song should have been composed before he begot his only child - and that, a daughter!

Saints have a mission to advise, warn and reform community to free it from the clutches of vile emotions, suicidal passions and immoral digressions. Even as the Bard performs this task he wonders in his *Tappi bratiki* (Todi) whether it is possible at all in this Kali Yuga to escape from getting drowned in the treacherous pond of sensualities. One hundred and fifty years have since gone and one could appreciate his rare vision better now. Doordarshan (TV) is a sufficient proof.

In portraying human foibles and failures, he faces the dire necessity of focusing on the deep maladies that ail society with a will to reform it as a true devotee of the foremost 'Symbol of Dharmic Conduct', Sri Rama. This is discernible in his well-meaning allusions to the frailties of men and women and his own. He spares himself not. One could see his anger, despair and sympathy in varying degrees in songs like *Emi jesite nemi* (Todi). It is relevant here to recall how the noble spouse of Sri Tulasidas thought it fit to reprimand her husband in terms as sharp as those of Tyagaraja :

Such is your infatuation for this body of a female constituted of phlegm, bones and blood! Hadst thou but offered half that love to the Lord, thou wouldst have ascended the very Vaikuntal.

Did not such a realisation descend on Cardinal Wolsey, though too late to save his life from execution by the fickle King of England? Again, but for the virtuous Devadasi Mohanangi, where was the guarantee that Kshetrajna would have reached the pristine heights he did? Tyagaraja's respect for good women finds ample expression in several songs like *Entanine varintunu* (Mukari).

That Tyagaraja was harsh on women is a surmise, a nebulous thought generated by his impregnable image as moralist and stern saint-scholar. But his magnificent opera *Nowka Charitramu* negates such assumption and proves that he is no dry-to-dust moraliser but is equally an eminent 'love and romance poet' who could bring out the finest nuances and fragrant graces of Sringeri. There is rejuvenating, amaranthine freshness in conception, conjuring description and flamboyant narration full of romantic tete-a-tete and niceties. (The verdant opera finds its micro echo in Subramanya Bharati's titillating song '*Sindhu Nadiyinmisai nilavinile*', a song that brings to eternal focus the precious cultural integration of pre-partition India fostered through centuries by men of vision.) That 'the soul should find rest in no fleshy thought, nor earthly affection' (Walter Hilton), but should be wedded to ethereal truths and codes of enlightened conduct is the prime theme of the opera of Sri Tyagaraja.

As the rasika ploughs through absorbing episodes in the opera - Why plough? The gopis have no heart to tear themselves apart from Sri Krishna even as the plough has no independent role once separated from mother earth - he is tempted to redraw even the extant pictures of Tyagaraja depicting him as a rugged Bhagavata sans exposure to captivating finesse of *Sringeri*! The remarkable dramatic presentation connotes the transition from olympian objectivity to metaphysical truth after an encounter and ordeal with the treachery of human passions and vagaries.

The Gopis of Brindavan kidnap (it is so) the divine child of gorgeous beauty and resplendent charm, Sri Krishna, and proceed on a boisterous, amorous boat excursion on river Yamuna to satisfy their emotional egoistic urges. The gopis became victims of successive dominant passions and phantasmal allurements engendered first by one affection and then by another excited and exposed to diverse urges. With feigned innocence, Krishna submits himself to all their guileless but stupid urges and girlish pranks. Nay, he encourages and eggs them on in their fun and frolic. Taking advantage of the tender age of child Krishna, the gopis run riot with passionate advances, indulgences and overtures. Having allowed them on their path of perdition adequately long, Krishna applies the brake. The boat is caught in a storm and develops leaks endangering the lives of all. The distraught gopis are made to part even with their clothes in a bid to plug holes in the boat; all in vain. Brought to senses, they seek at last divine succour which is readily forthcoming. The soul of the gopis is saved. (The boat is the earthy body, the Yamuna symbolises the swaying world of emotions and the storm nothing but individual or collective whims, fancies and desires.)

In this brief action-packed episode, Tyagaraja is meticulous in highlighting the baffling thrusts and turns, Bhavas and Rasa of fast-changing passions and situations with immaculate finesse and impeccable mastery. The titillating moods and Lilas of the gopis are exquisitely narrated with immense zest. In the action-packed 'super Sringeri opera, to quote T.S. Parthasarathy, the Vaggeyakara 'walks on razor's edge to avoid all indiscreet digressions into sensuous references like Kshetrajna, Jayadeva and Kalidasa. And he brings out the subtle lessons of spiritual surrender, goal and salvation and the underlying spiritual passion of gopis by making them cry and pray fervently in '*Alla Kallolamayenamma*' (Sowrashram) thus :

Whatever be our fate, Krishna should be saved. We offer our bodies, pray ensure that Krishna is taken to the shore'

The surrender of spirit (*Atma Nivedan*) is total and when Krishna is saved, the gopis too! (The chosen Raga is *Sowrashram* as Krishna's abode Dwaraka is in *Sowrashtra*!)

The reference to *Nowka Charitramu* here is to highlight the fact that in this beautiful opera, Tyagaraja has not a harsh word for gopis since by no means they could be aligned with the earthy, fleshy coquettes. Though he comes down heavily with shrieks and sparks of poetry against parasites, he extends his warm poetic umbrella and paternal indulgences to the distract ladies of Brindavan whose fault or frailty lay in lack of awareness of the inherent spiritual content of their passionate urges for Sri Krishna. The poet is seen at his best in songs like *Tanayande Premayanuchu* (Bhairavi) and *Yenomu Nocitimo* (Punnagavarali) in dealing with romantic delicacies. The Bard's dictum is to be viewed against the best traditions of Bharath. The incidental fact that he had once been harsh on women of depravity does not *ipso facto* lead to a conclusion or even a premise that he had aversion to the genre. He has given vent to such views in respect of men of poor character too, in law too, an occasional act does not constitute or betray guilt unless it is backed by a guilty mind - *actum non facit reum nisi mens sit rea* ! That the great composer had the greatest sympathy and solicitude willing to extend all indulgences to good women is apparent from *Nowka Charitramu*.

A final peep. The indulgence shown by Tyagaraja lies in the secret that he involuntarily joins the team of gopis and is in the thick of their songs, dances and pranks since he is himself a gopi at heart seeking the Ultimate. With such transformation in his self, is there cause or occasion to criticise? For a while, he clearly takes leave of the serene supreme moralist, Sri Rama and seeks refuge with the amiable, accommodative new patron, Sri Krishna. He turns a gopi to enjoy and drink deep the joy and fruits of the boating spree.

- Courtesy : "Yet Another Garland"



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The Mystic Bard of Oothukkadu

By Dr. Sulochana Rajendran

*"Ananda Nartana Ganapathim Bhavaye
Chidananda Mooladhara Omkara
Gajavadanam paramam param"*

The dance of ecstasy is in progress. Behind it, however, is a story of 'awe' that unfolds itself with great impact in the Bhagavathar's interpretation. With their hearts in their mouths the audience watch in Needamangalam Krishnamoorthy Bhagavathar's Upanyasa, Ganesha gyrating in frenzy, to the horror of the celestial assemblage, struggling to free himself of the serpent that had taken refuge in his trunk while he himself was lost in the excitement over the dance contest of Shiva - Parvati. The inimitable Bhagavathar, incidentally, brings to note that this dance of Ganesha paved the way for the Naga natyam, more precisely, the Kalinga Nartanam in the Krishnavatar. The same when visualised in dance brings forth its Abhinaya import and Nritya potential.

Whatever the interpretation or story line, the song structure speaks for its validity. Composed in the Samashti Charana format, the song lilts in lyrical excellence and Solkattu stances, weaving through, in part, Madhyama Kala Sahitya and thereby proves its history, its period in the evolution of music.

But the composer, Oothukkadu Venkata Subbar has not been given his due in the lineage of the "Historical Greats".

History abounds in mystery especially in the areas of literature and fine arts. Where there had been an oral tradition prevailing down the centuries, quite a number of creative geniuses had left behind them no recorded evidences regarding their creations. However their works, compositions, are the only "living" evidences of their genius. Venkata Kavi was very much one among them. He was by far the most prolific composers in terms of variety and range of composi-

tions, in the pre-Trinity era which was by no means a period of inactivity. His creations cover a variety of compositions such as Varnam, Kriti, Saptaratna, Navavarnas, Ragamalika, Padam, Javali, Tillana, Periapurana Keerthanas, Ashtakam, Viruththam etc.

While the music world has been hesitating to accept the Kavi in the same vein as they do the Trinity and other composers prior to and after their advent, the contents of the Kavi's songs, their structure, their musical finesse reveal more than what records formally convey.

It may be pointed out that the course of centuries between Purandara Dasa and the Music Trinity saw many composers enriching Karnatak music both on the Bhagavata tradition and the art front. At the time of the advent of the Trinity the environment was surcharged with music of immense varieties and high quality performers. In fact, the musical atmosphere, was rich with Bhakti, Bhava, Raga, Tala and poetic excellence.

The Keertans of the bards right from the time of Jayadeva were a source of inspiration. Purandara Dasa's Devamamas, Arunagirinadar's Tiruppugazh, Narayana Teertha's Tarangams, Kshetragna's Padams provided a rich repertoire to draw inspiration from. In addition, the hymns of Maharashtra saints, Tulsidas' "Ramacharitamanas", etc had been popularised in the South by Keertankars who had migrated along with the Maratha rulers to Tanjavur.

If such was the emotional Bhakti surge on the popular musical level, the quality of art music on the classical level reached a new high with veterans like Merattur Veerabhadrayya rendering outstanding service by formulating conventions and standards for its systematic presentation. His Swarajathis and Padas were exquisite models of art music. Composers like Kasinathayya Govindasamayya, Ghanam Sinayya, Margadarsi

Sesha Iyengar, Sarangapani and others had all contributed to the enhancement of Manodharma Sangeetha and systematic rendition of compositions. Pachimiriam Adiyappaiah of Viriboni, Bhairavi Ata Tala Varnam, fame, popularised the style of Alapana, Madyamakala rendition and Pallavi singing. Purandara Dasa's musical Suladis had their own impact. To boot, the Maratha King's Compositions and opera, *Pallaki Seva Prabandham* added to the varieties.

Besides, Venkatamakhhi's systematisation of Ragas - the 72 Melakarta scheme, the subsequent Janaka-Janya Ragas with the already prevailing familiar and rare Ragas opened the flood-gates of melody to fertile the musical soil through various Raga channels.

No doubt, Oothukkadu Kavi who was born during this period, would have availed of all these in his musical outpourings, blending Bhakti with articulate aesthetics of art. And the Trinity who followed could have shaped them with finesse in their gems of creations, heralding the 'Golden Era of Karnatak Music'.

Venkata Kavi's birth date is clouded in controversy. Some say it is 17th century and some say it is 18th century - 1700 - 1765). It is recorded that when he died Syama Sastri, the eldest of the Trinity, was just three years old. The Kavi's song dates him after Tulsidas, who belonged to 16th century ! In one of his Saptaratnas, *Bhajanamrita*, he pays his obeisance to saint-poets before his time, and the stance

".... Vishnujitta Parakala Purandara
Tulsidasa Sharanaravinda
Dooli Hari Shiva Guha" ("*Bhajanamrita*")
proves that.

A Naisthika Brahmachari, he was a recluse, a Bhakta, who poured his devotion in songs of ecstasy and agony. He learnt from none (save in the initial stage) nor taught any. He was an Ekalavya. He sang in solitude and composed. A Nagaswara Vidwan, Rudra Pasupati, learnt them on the sly and brought them to light. We

also learn that his elder brother, Kattu Krishnaiar, noted down some of them and passed on to his scions through his daughter. The eminent musicologist, R. Rangaramanuja Ayyangar records that the Kavi's songs were all preserved in palm-leaf bundles kept in earthen pots and passed on through seven generations. And it was given to Needamangalam Krishnamoorthy Bhagavathar (of 6th generation) and the popular 'Oothukkadu Brothers' - Muthukrishnan and Rajagopalan (of 7th generation) to propagate the bard's compositions in their full-fledged glory.

If Oothukkadu is one of the beautiful gifts of Nature, being a Jungle of Fountains, the fertile soil has also been flourished with fountain of strains emanating from the Kavi. Though his Ishta Devata was Krishna, he had composed on all deities, Muruga claiming greater importance. As for the style of the Kavi and his Kavithvam one may quote 'Garland' Rajagopalan who writes :

"Surely the Bard was a Gopi at the heart and dancer - himself as revealed by the inexhaustible reservoir of emotions and bhavas elegantly sculpted and impounded in his lucid, aromatic songs' rich in lyrics and easy-paced in tempo. His songs enjoy the majestic flow of Raga in harmony with the Sahitya. Ayyar was blest with the charming skill of Nattuvanar' the poetic vision of a virgin lover, refinement and expertise of a dancing marvel and clarity of imagination of a poet of infinite Grace. He navigates his actor through a sea of fertile emotions in a measure that is quite amazing to flow from an austere recluse".

"Yet Another Garland"

Venkata Kavi was sure a trail-blazer bringing into vogue many a form of composition with refined aesthetics in Sanskrit and Tamil. He could be a precursor to the Trinity in more ways than one. It is unlikely that they were not influenced, by his supreme creations. Many 'firsts' could be attributed to him. His Kritis abound in musical embellishments or "technical beauties" as they are called, such as Sangaathees, Swarakashara, Madhyama Kala Sahitya, Solkattu Swaras, Yathi alliterations, Samashti Charana, etc.

The Kavi's Saptaranas could well be a prototype of Tyagaraja's Pancharatnas. Though Tyagaraja is said to have composed his Pancharatnas at the behest of his Sishyas in the

Tana Varna pattern and that he composed them at different times and not himself grouped them into Pancharatnas, the structural similarity between the Natai Ratnas *Jagadanandakaraka* and *Bhajanamrita Paramananda* could not be ignored. A connoisseur has found similarity in content between Nata Saptaratna and Sri Raga Pancharatna. Could Tyagaraja have included the Kavi in his *Endarao Mahanubhavulu Andariki Vanadanamu*? But one difference could be perceived that while Tyagaraja composed in traditional Ghana Ragas Venkata Kavi used both Ghana and Rakti Ragas like Arabhi, Abhogi, Keeravani, Madhyamavathi etc. His *Marakatha Manimaya Chela* (Arabhi) is popular in Kuchipudi dance while *Mahasayahrudaya* (Abhogi), *Balasara Murali* (Keeravani), besides the Natai Ratna figure in music performances.

Venkata Kavi's Navavarna Kritis have predated Muthuswamy Dikshitar's Kritis of the same genre. Here too the Kavi had used Rakti Ragas, like Hindolam, Nadanamakriya, Bilahari, Arabhi, Ahiri while Dikshitar composed in Todi, Kalyani, Kambhoji, Sankarabharanam, Bharavi etc. Both had great vision and followed the worship of the Divine Mother through the Avaranams. Kavi composed on Kamakshi and Dikshitar on Kamlamaba. The group in Kavi's creations also have a Dhyana Kriti and Mangala Kriti making them eleven in all. But the Tala the Kavi used makes him a rare Vaggeyakara. *Sadanandamayi* (Hindolam), for instance, is composed in Sankeena Matya Tala.

It was the bard of Oothukkadu who composed a lilting *Rasa Keli Vilasa Prakasa* in Kharaharapriya even before Tyagaraja took to popularising it. The other two of Trinity do not seem to have composed in this Raga.

Needamangalam Krishnamoorthy Bhagavathar in one of his Pravachans observed that it was the Senchuruti Kriti *Muthu Krishna Memudam*, a Samashti Charanam, which paved way for Madhyamakala Sahitya. There are a number of Kritis in this genre among his compositions more popular among them being "*Brindavana Nilaye*" (Reetigowla), "*Aparnanjanamire*" (Kapi) etc.

Besides Solkattu Swaras which exude Sahitya perception he was an ace spinner of Gati Bheda sequences. *Vitasamavara Jala* (Vasanta), *Nada Murali Gana Vilola* (Hameer Kalyani), the Abhogi Saptaratna are some examples. It is learnt that the Kriti in Vasanta which courses through the lilting Tisra, Khanda, Chatusra Gatis, is sung at the commencement of Gokulashtami festival at the Nartana Krishna temple in Oothukkadu.

That the bard was equally an adept in Nayaka - Nayika Bhava Padam composition is proved by

"Endavidamagilum Nanda mukundanai
Inda Vazhi varum Vagai Parudi"
in Kambhoji and

Avaraga Varuvuro Varamattar - Idil
Adisayamennadi Anname - Kannan
in Saraswathi

One finds in the recently published *Sri Krishna Ghanam* - Part II a "Kalinga Nartanam - Natangam" which appears a combination of Tillana and Daru Varnam. More light needs to be thrown on this form of composition (a blend).

The Kavi's Tillanas have names from Ancient Tamil Ragas. More popular ones are in Senchuruti. A variety of Ragamalikas he has composed besides a *Denuswasapuram Ashtakam* which is sung as a Mangalam. (*Dhenuswasapuram* is another name of Oothukkadu).

Last but not the least Venkata Kavi's sublimity and unparalleled creativity finds an abode (Padaiveedu) in his heart for Lord Muruga.

Or Ezhu Padai Veedu Kondai - Un
Aru Padai Veedum En Ullamum Semdaga"

That he was a recluse and sought anonymity is proved by his using his Mudra "Venkata Kavi" only in a couple of Kritis, the Ghanta Navavarna and Ramayana Ragamalika. It is mostly "Kalinga Nartana", that figures as a signature. However, the structure, the substance and the architectonic lucidity and liit mark his compositions as a class in themselves.

Courtesy : "*Souvenir of Fine Arts Society*"
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Syama Sastri And His Compositions

Dr. T. S. Ramakrishnan

Classical Karnatic music, compared to its highly developed form of the present day, was a mere sapling in the Vijayanagar times when it got the name Karnataka and took its headquarters, so to say, in Tanjore under the Naik Kings in the 17th century. The sapling has now grown into a large and beautiful tree of Karnatic music bearing highly scented and beautifully coloured flowers of melodic Ragas and clusters of luscious fruits with very sweet nuts of the various forms of compositions.

During Venkatamakhī's period classical Karnatic music consisted of the Four "Dandis", Gita, Raga, Thaya and Prabandha. Of these, the Gita was bestowed a higher status and was deemed as the official type of composition. Venkatamakhī has written in detail about these four "Dandis" in his *Chaturdandi Prakasika*. More important is his 72 Mela scheme, on which foundation of our present-day music has been built and developed. It was during the period of Bhosala Pratapasimha's reign that the Kriti type of composition became established as the official type in place of the former Gita, by the then great pioneer Kriti-composers, like Marga-darsi Virabhadra, Marga-darsi Seshalengar, Ghanam Siniah and others.

It was during the period of about 100 years, the latter half of the 18th and the first half of the 19th century, that classical Karnatic music attained the highest developed form that it has at the present day, mainly by the contributions of the three great geniuses in music who happened to flourish together during that period. They were (1) the great Tyagaraja (1759-1847) (2) Muthuswami Dikshitar (1775-1835); and (3) Syama Sastri (1763-1827). These three great composers, by common consent, are considered as the "Musical Trinity" of South India. All of them were scholars in Sanskrit and Telugu and were versed in Veda and Sastras including Mantra and Jyotisha. They were great devotees and had their own Ishta Devatas (deities) whom they worshipped with great fervour and Bhakti. All the three were born in Tiruvurur.

It is believed that Tyagaraja had his inspiration in advanced music by the Sage Narada himself who came to him under the guise of a Sanyasi and presented to him the *Svaranava*, a rare and precious treatise on music. This treatise is not available at present, what happened to it we do not know. Tyagaraja mentions this name *Svararanava* in the last Charana of his Kriti, "*Svara raga sudharasa* in Sankarabharana. The passage runs as "*Rajata Girisudu (Paramasiva) Nagajaku (Parvati) delpu Swarnanava marmamulu*". It is on the basis of this line that the above conjecture of the *Svaranava* as a treatise has been made. In the introductory verse of *Sangraha Chudamani*, Govinda, its author, also mentions that it was Paramasiva who described to his consort Parvati about the Lakshana of music. From this I submit that the so-called *Svaranava* may be the same as the "*Sangraha Chudamani*". Further the phrase "*Svaranava marmamulu*" in Tyagaraja may mean only the secrets of the Swara Lakshana and *Sangraha Chudamani* has been proved to be in his possession and some of the Ragas described there are found handled by him in his later compositions.

Muthuswami Dikshitar had as his preceptor the great Chidambaranatha Yogi of Kasi, and Syama Sastri's preceptor was the great Sangita Svami.

Syama Sastri belonged to a family of Valdika Smarta Archakas. His father was Visvanatha Iyer, an Archaka in the Bangaru Kamakshi temple in Tanjore (originally at Kanchi and brought from there). Syama Sastri was born at Tiruvarur in the year 1763 and his Sarman was Venkata Subrahmanya, and was affectionately called "Syama Krishna". His horoscope revealed to his parents that he was destined to become great and famous. His parents were not musicians, but Sastri, from birth, was destined to become great and famous. He learnt the rudiments of music from his maternal uncle and mastered the same in quite a short time. His parents did not care much about his musical talent and meant him only to continue the family profession of an Archaka of Kamakshi.

When Sastri was about 18 years old a great musician "Sangita Svami" happened to meet him and found in him great talent with a bright future in music. He immediately volunteered to teach him advanced music in all its intricate details and within a period of three years, Sastri finished learning every thing about music including the Raga Lakshanas, the intricacies of Tala Prastaras and Svara Prastaras. Before leaving his pupil Sangita Svami advised Sastri to listen to (but not learn from) the music of the then great senior Tanjore Samsthana Sangita Vidvan, Adippiah, renowned among the musicians of the period, the author of the now most famous Tana Vama, *Viriboni*, in Bhairavi Raga. Accordingly Sastri met Adippiah, made his acquaintance and soon they became thick friends. Adippiah began to call Sastri affectionately as "Kamakshi" and developed great regard for the youngster. Thus Sastri gained vast experience in practical music by listening to Adippiah.

Unlike the other two of the Musical Trinity, Tyagaraja and Dikshitar, Syama Sastri was well off. Besides practising music, he took his duties as the Archaka of the Bangaru Kamakshi temple, following the footsteps of his father. He was a devout Bhakta of Kamakshi and began composing Kritis and other forms of music in praise of his favourite deity, Kamakshi. He made use of his knowledge of the intricate time measures in the structure of his compositions and soon developed a style of his own quite different from those of the other composers. He coined several of his compositions at first in Eka Tala and while rendering them he easily converted them into Misra Gati and that such compositions came to be settled in the Misra Laghu in all its intricate patterns. Sastri is believed to have composed about 300 pieces including Svarajatis, Varnas, Kritis and Ragamalikas. Most of his compositions are in praise of his Ishta Devata, Kamakshi. His favourite Ragas were Anandabhairavi and Saveri. Once he happened to visit Madurai and there composed 9 Kritis in praise of Minakshi of Madurai, the group being known as "Navaratna Malika".

At the present day only a few of his compositions are available to us; probably about 20 or 25 authentic pieces are in good vogue. Subbarama Dikshitar, the author of the famous *Sangita Sampradaya Pradarsini*, had with him more than 100 compositions of Syama Sastri and promised to publish them in a separate book, but did not survive long enough to fulfill his promise. In his *Pradarsini* we have authentic versions of 6 of Sastri's compositions, the 3 Svarajatis, the Tana Varna in Anandabhairavi Raga and the two Kritis *Triloka Mata* (Paraju) and *Brovavamma* (Manji). One requires great proficiency and skill in music to render the compositions of Syama Sastri, which are found to be in intricate time measures. This is one of the reasons why only a small number of his compositions are available at present. Also his disciples were fewer in number than those of the other two, Tyagaraja and Dikshitar and these few disciples were not care to divulge their knowledge of the compositions of their master.

Comparing the styles of the Musical Trinity, it is generally considered that the compositions of Tyagaraja are of *Draksha* (grapes) *paka* (i.e.) they are very easily learnt and the melody easily appreciated by the listeners; the compositions of Dikshitar are considered to be of *Narikela* (coco-

nut) *paka*, (i.e.) the compositions have to be carefully studied with regard to their structure, melody and the Sahitya and well digested, before their greatness could be appreciated, just like the hard coconut shell has first to be broken before getting at the sweet kernel inside; Syama Sastri's compositions, on the other hand, are usually described as of *Kadali* (plantain fruit) *paka*, (i.e.) their melody and structure can be appreciated as easily as getting at the sweet plantain pulp just by easily peeling away its skin. But considering the intricate time measures pattern and difficulty to render these pieces correctly with all the Raga Bhava, Subbarama Dikshitar describes Syama Sastri's compositions as of *Narikela paka* and not *Kadali paka*.

An important and interesting anecdote is mentioned of the prowess of Sastri in the field of music. The incident is about how Sastri vanquished the famous Bobbili Kesaviah, having the title "Bhooloka Chapa Chutti," from the North, who came to Tanjore and challenged the Samasthana musicians for contest, and how he saved the reputation of the Tanjore Court.

After Syama Sastri, his son, Subbaraya Sastri became a scholar and a composer like his father. We have several of his compositions and many of them are popular in the present-day concerts. Subbaraya Sastri took Annasami Sastri, his nephew (elder brother's son) as his adopted son and taught him music. Annasami Sastri also became a great musician and composer. He is said to have composed Chitta Svaras and Svara Sahityas as appendages to several compositions of his grand father Syama Sastri.

I shall now proceed to describe and give list of the compositions that I have come across and said to have been composed by Syama Sastri and which are popular among the concert artists of the present day :

(3) Svarajatis

1. <i>Rave Himagiri</i>	Todi - Adi; -	Deity, Kamakshi
2. <i>Kamakshi</i> :	Bhairavi ; Misra Eka ;	Deity - Kamakshi
3. <i>Kamakshi</i> :	Edukulakambhoji -	Misra Eka - Deity Kamakshi

All these three are model Svarajati compositions, the Charanas respectively starting on the Svaras in Arohana Krma.

(2) Tana Varnas

1. <i>Samini</i>	Anandabhairavi; Ata;	Deity - Kanchi Varadaraja
2. <i>Dayanidhe</i> :	Begada; Adi;	Deity - Amba

(1) Ragamalika

Ambaninnu, a Ragamalika in 9 Ragas, Rupaka. The authorship of this is doubted and it is said to be the composition of Chinna Krishna and not Syama Sastri. In the concluding Sri Raga section the Sahitya runs as *Syama Krishnuni Sahodari Sri Raja Rajeswari* as heard by me from my elders while I was quite young.

(7) Kritis : (Navaratnamalika) in praise of Minakshi

(1) <i>Minalochani</i>	Dhanyasi	Chapu
(2) <i>Mayamma</i>	Ahiri	Adi
(3) <i>Nannubrovu</i>	Lalita	Chapu
(4) <i>Mari Vere</i>	Anandabhairavi	Chapu
(5) <i>Devi Ni pada</i>	Kambhoji	Adi
(6) <i>Devi Minanetri</i>	Sankarabharana	Adi
(7) <i>Sarajadalanetri</i>	Sankarabharana	Adi

(18) Kritis : in praise of Kamakshi

(1) <i>Ninne namminanu</i>	Todi	Chapu
(2) <i>Kanaka Salla</i>	Punnagavarali	Adi
(3) <i>Parvati ninu</i>	Kalgada	Rupaka
(4) <i>Trilokamata</i>	Paraju	Eka (Also version in Chapu)
(5) <i>Sanfatam ennai</i>	Paraju	Adi (Kannis in Tamil)
(6) <i>Tarunamidamma</i>	Gaulipantu	Adi (in Tamil)
(7) <i>Durusuga kripa</i>	Saveri	Adi (Also addressed as "Pranatarati haru rani Dharmasamvardhani")
		Chapu
(8) <i>Brovavamma</i>	Manji	Adi (Kanchi Kamakshi)
(9) <i>O Jagadamba</i>	Anandabhairavi	Rupaka
(10) <i>Pahi Sn</i>	Anandabhairavi	Adi (Kamakshi) .The Sahitya of the second line in the Anupallavi is usually sung as "Iagu Chesevu vota harinchi vevegame nannu". When I was a young boy I have heard my elders sing this line as "Iagu Jaagu Jesevu vota harinchi" etc. The extra word <i>Jaagu</i> seems to fit better to the structure and meaning of the Sahitya).
(11) <i>Palinchi Kamakshi</i>	Madhyamavati	Chapu (Bangaru Kamakshi)
		Adi (Kanchi Kamakshi) (my findings about this Janya Raga Chintamani is furnished at the end)
(12) <i>Kamakshi</i>	Varali	Chapu (<i>Ekambaranatha Manohari-Kanchi Kamakshi</i>)
(13) <i>Devi brova</i>	Chintamani	Chapu (<i>Kamakoti Pithadhi Vasini</i>)
		Rupaka
(14) <i>Ninnu vinaga</i>	Purvakalyani	Rupaka (Sanskrit Sahitya set in the same dhatu as that of the above 16th "Birana")
(15) <i>Talininnu</i>	Kalyani	Adi (<i>Kanchi Kamakshi</i> occurs only in the Svara sahitya appendage)
(16) <i>Birana Varalichchi</i>	Kalyani	
(17) <i>Himadnsute</i>		
(18) <i>Mayamma</i>	Natakuranji	

(5) Kritis : in praise of Brihannayaki

(1) <i>Nilayataksni</i>	Mayamalavagula	Tripata (Nilayataksni)
(2) <i>Janani</i>	Saveri	Adi (Rajrajeswari)
(3) <i>Sankari</i>	Saveri	Rupaka (Akhilandesvari)
(4) <i>Sariyevaramma</i>	Bhairavi	Khanda Thampa (Amba)
(5) <i>Samininne</i>	Begada	Adi (Muthukumara)
(6) <i>Nannubrovra rada</i>	Janaranjani	Tripata (Amba) (I have heard this piece sung i in Purnachandrika raga, when I was a young boy, by my elders)
(7) <i>Keruna Juda</i>	Varali	Tripata (Dharmasamvardhani)
(8) <i>Sankari</i>	Kalyani	Ata (Chapu) (Mangalam)

(2) Kritis of doubtful authorship

(1) <i>Palimpavamma</i>	Mukhari	Adi (Svaymbhu natha taruni mathuravani)
(2) <i>Parakela</i>	Kedaragaula	Adi (There is a version of this Kritt with the Ankitam as Sri Krishnanuta).

Note on Raga Chintamani :

Syama Sastri is said to have composed the Kritt *Devi brova* (13th given above in praise of Kanchi Kamakshi) in the Raga Chintamani: This raga, Chintamani, is described as a Janya of the 56th Mela, Shanmukhapriya, in the present day books on music as something well agreed and taken for granted. Its features given are :

A Shadava Ubhaya Vakra Raga having Arohana S R M P D N S and Avarohana S P D M G R S ; in prayoga p d n s , the Dhaivata is of Chatusruti and hence the Raga is Bhashanga; r m d n are Raga Chhaya Svaras and p r g r a Vissha Prayoga.

I have searched for the Lakshana of this Raga, Chintamani, in the three treatises on music mentioned below and I am giving my findings in details against each as under :

(i) *Sangraha Chudamani*, by Govinda, a very famous treatise and deemed as a quite authoritative work at the present day and containing 350 Lakshana Gitas in so many Ragas;

(1) Chitamani : One of 3 Janya Ragas of the 7th Mela, Senavati with Arohana s r g m s m p d n s and Avarohana s d p m g r s .

(2) 56th Mela, Shanmukhapriya, has the four Janya Ragas, Trimurti, Vasukari Bhashani and Gingadhya, but Chintamani not given

(ii) *Gayakalochana* : by Tachur Singarachari, belonging to the direct Sishya parampara of Syama Sastri:

(1) Chintamani : One of 10 Janya Ragas of the 7th Mela, Senavati, with the same Arohana and Avarohana as given in *Sangraha Chudamani*

(2) (a second) Chintamani: One of 26 Janya Ragas of the 52nd Mela, Ramapriya with Arohana s g m p d n and Avarohana D p m p G r s n s ;

(3) 56th Mela Shanmukhapriya, has 11 Janya Ragas, including the four given in *Sangraha Chudamani*, but Chintamani is not found among them

(iii) *Sangita Svara Prastara Sagaramu* : by Nadamuni Panditulu, gives the longest list of Janya Ragas :

(1) 7th Mela, Senavati, has 23 Janya Ragas which include the first Chitamani Janya Ragas with the same formula as given in *Gayakalochana and Sangraha Chudamani*.

(2) 52nd Mela, Ramapriya, has 38 Janya Ragas which include the second Chintamani Janya Raga with the same formula as given in *Gayakalochana* as mentioned above ;

(3) 59th Mela, Dharmavati, has 22 Janya Ragas which include a Chintamani with the formula S R m D N S S N D M g R S

(4) 56th Mela, Shanmukhapriya, has 23 Janya Ragas including the four given in *Sangraha Chudamani*, but Chintamani is not found among them

The details furnished above make me feel and conclude that the Kritt, "*Devi brova*", might have been composed in Shanmukhapriya itself and it is not clear how Chintamani Raga came to be referred to this Kritt.

- Courtesy : "*Souvenir of The Music Academy*", Madras.

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From the Archives

Evolution of Indian Music

By Pt. Omkarnath Thakur

(Pt. Omkarnath Thakur, a Sangeeth Marthand, a rare musician who excelled in both Lakshya and Lakshana was a deep thinker, a great orator, teacher and writer too. SHANMUKHA paid its Anjali to the Marthand in its April 1997 issue, commemorating his birth centenary. And we publish below an enlightening article the 'Marthand' himself wrote for "Music Mirror" forty years ago.)

It is my personal experience that the answer to the question 'how the evolution of music' took place ordinarily or how music was evolved from nature or how music was gradually evolved simultaneously with the evolution of nature, lies in the minute examination of the working of Nature of human behaviour. Not only are you all aware but some of you might have personally experienced that the human mind sometimes finds itself in such a state when man is dumb-founded and speech is stifled.

When the heart is giving expression to its feelings which it is not able to contain within itself or when all the feelings are trying to find expression at the same time and are incapable of being checked, then man finds that words or expression through language is found to be imperfect and insufficient to convey all that it wants to express. In such a state, these wordless feelings which have flooded the heart automatically find expression with the help of the Swaras, Layas and Abhinayas of music. Who has not found it in his experience that when a man has very strong feelings then according to the laws of nature, on account of some invisible inspiration he finds himself laughing, dancing, crying in ecstasy without being aware of it?

Natural Urge

During spring, when nature is in full bloom and possesses full vitality, the cuckoo flies from tree to tree and leaf to leaf singing melodies of love. Its cooings spread joy, happiness and ecstasies of love in the world and makes the whole atmosphere full of love. It is no use telling you

that the cuckoo cooes only during spring. It gets inspiration from nature only and then begins to coo. In the same manner, we find the peacock passionately dancing during the monsoon. Its painful melodies and its ever youthful dance of love have such powerful effects in our minds. Whose feelings are not roused by seeing its dance? Even nature blossoms forth into youth on hearing its music. Flowers and leaves also put on a new garb and even earth emits a wonderful fragrance that gladdens the hearts of men. When we learn that even inanimate objects in nature are so much affected by music, it will not be difficult to imagine the condition of the human heart.

A number of poets have very aptly described how spring, monsoon, and autumn have wonderful effects on the human heart. Along with these illustrations, it would not be out of place to say all the children of mother Nature, according to the natural power and weapons that they possess, experience feelings of happiness or sorrow and give expression to them. In Nature, man is also one of the animals, a rational animal, because all the faculties are developed in him; Nature has equipped him with all the faculties such as mind, thought, speech, desire etc. But in spite of all this, man remains an animal and like all other animals, he has also feelings of joy, grief, etc., and at times he gives free vent to them. As a result of these powerful feelings he sometimes automatically and even unconsciously begins to sing or dance or fly into ecstasy or becomes benumbed. It is a law of nature, fully experienced by the heart unconsciously try to come out and find expression. At present, we do not refer to

people who have acquired mastery over feelings by extraordinary mental development, nor do we refer to those who check these feelings in all possible ways and prevent them from finding a natural outlet. In this world of ours, they are either saints or hypocrites.

We are thinking of those people who follow the inspiration derived from nature and give vent to their feeling in a natural manner without checking them. Those who had occasion to see the tribes living in the forests, mountains or rural areas, will at once realise the truth of this statement from their own experience. On account of the difference in bringing up, we find that there are different ways in which people from the towns, villages or the forests and hills express their feelings. This difference is bound to remain, but we can realise one thing, namely, that like other animals, man also on account of the inspiration derived from his subconscious self, naturally and automatically begins to sing, dance, cry, play on the instruments etc. I feel that we may be able to find out the notes which were the natural outcome of their ecstasy. These notes can be said to be the notes of the early stages in the evolution of music.

Automatic Creation

The music which was prevalent in the beginning of the world or in the infancy of the human race cannot be found in existence today. Still we find that there are certain tribes on the earth which have not at all been influenced by civilisation even to-day. We can roughly divide the people of the modern world into 4 divisions or groups. (1) Highly sophisticated or civilised (2) Half civilised (3) Semi primitive and (4) primitive or barbarious.

First of all, we shall consider the most primitive people who have not been influenced by civilisation at all; who are ignorant about Swara, Tala, Raga, Laya, Abhinaya, etc., who sing or dance whenever like the peacock or cuckoo they are inspired from within. The tunes which are found in their songs, the Layas which are visible when

they bend their limbs in the course of a dance or the Talas which are the outcome of their beating on their drums, may be termed the beginning of natural music. These Swaras and Layas or Abhinayas can be termed automatic creation without being ascribed to any poetic imagination or fancy.

I believe that none should have any objection if we describe these Swaras, Layas and Abhinayas as natural. We find wonderful similarity in the songs of the people who live in Kailas or in the mountains of Nepal, the forests of Simla, Kulu, Dalhousie, Kashmir, Abu, Girmar, Ooty etc., or the songs of the people who serve as domestic servants in the houses of the urban people. They have not yet given up their traditional music or dancing, like the Bhils, Kirats, Nagas or the Kaliparaj and Kolies of Gujerat. Minute examination of these songs show that we get the notes of what we now call SARANGA in their songs. In their dancing and playing drums, we find the Talas of Hinch, Kaharwa, Khemta or Dadra. This natural music of theirs contains such a tempo that even we as onlookers are tempted to dance. This Sarang and the above-mentioned Talas are predominantly found in the folk-lore and the Rasas and Garbas of Gujarat and Kathiawar or in the Kafis of Punjab or Sind or in the folk-songs and dances of Maratha, Bengal and other parts of India.

Striking Similarity

The inner desire to dance and music found to come into existence whenever either in a music or theatrical hall the audience begin to stamp their feet or in other ways try to provide an accompaniment to the programme. In Europe, we find that on hearing such Talas, people get up and begin to dance. Even those who are old or dignified give expression to the inward pleasure they feel while giving Tala with their feet or head. One gentleman interested in music who had stayed in Africa for a number of years, expressed his surprise to me that he had heard the notes of Saranga in the songs of an African prisoner when he was led out for the cellar and also in the music

of the mountaineers or Switzerland. He was surprised to hear it and wondered as to how the Sarang Raga has reached Switzerland. All these experiences lead us to believe that man's desire to sing had given birth to the notes of Saranga. When man was inspired by his surroundings to sing, say, as a result of some mental activity and his feelings wanted to come out his heart became alive and feelings began to overflow from it, the music which emerged from this natural play of feelings was in its natural form and was in the notes of Saranga.

The First Raga

We learn, nay, we may have to believe that Sarang came into existence as the first Raga in this world in the form of a song's attache, a sort of incarnation of human feelings. Students of music are aware that Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Ni Swaras are the first Swaras in Saranga. Study and thorough examination leads us to believe that when Nishadh is joined to the Shadjia or when Shadjia comes after Nishad, then naturally this Komal Nishad goes up and then it acquires the character of Kakali or Tivra Nishad. There are certain factors at work in the human mind which inspires this Nishad and then unconsciously this Nishad becomes Tivra when meeting the Shadjia. On account of the weighty cause, the Nishad which is found to be Komal in the Ragas, automatically becomes Tivra Nishad in all the Ragas. In spite of all this, it is certain that Komal Nishad is more powerful than Tivra Nishad.

The pitch of the natural song found in the music of the primitive people, as mentioned

above, is not higher than the Nishad of the Madya Saptak. It touches the Komal Nishad and then always does the Avaroha. The Nyasa is on the Rekab always and it descends on the Shadjia in the form of the Antyaswara. It is sometimes said that when they begin from the Shadjia of the Madhya Saptak, they touch the Tivra Nishad of the Mandra Saptak. In this way, the whole Melody reflects the form of Saranga. In the songs of these people, which we have heard though on account of their being in a foreign tongue. I have not been able to understand their meaning or to commit them to memory, still from the point of view of their Swaras it is true that these notes never go beyond the Shadjia. They have their Avaroha from the Komal Nishad and expressing the mental condition of the singer, they are still on the Shadjia. In this way continuously flows the stream of their songs.

If my statement supported by self-experience is not disbelieved, then it would not be difficult to accept that by natural inclination, man had a desire to sing and the Swaras which came forth from his lips were five, and notes similar to modern Saranga spontaneously came forth from the throat of the primitive man, when he had no knowledge of music but as a result of inner inspiration. I have learnt from experience that some unexpressed feeling of the heart wanted to find expression and it assumed the form of Saranga. So far we have seen and realised that man had an inspiration to sing, and from his voice, the common swaras Sa, Ri, Ma, Pa, Ni, Pa, Ma, Ri of current Sarang came forth. When people think about the origin of the Ragas, then it is possible, that Saranga will be accepted as the 'Adi Raga' the Pioneer or the first Raga.

Golden Words

'In music proportion is beauty, balance is elegance, restraint is power, without them presentation becomes dry and eminently forgettable.'

- Sangeetha Kalanidhi D. K. Pattammal

Season and Time Elements in Indian Music

By Vaidyanatha Bharadwaj

One of the vital points of difference between the Northern and Southern systems of Indian Music is the prime position given to the seasonal and time elements in relation to the Ragas and Raginis in the North with almost fanatical zeal, while Southern (Karnatak) School which is unanimously admitted as keeping itself nearer and more faithful to the original Indian Mother Music has not been known to attach any importance to the time elements. The somewhat similar line of demarcation between 'male' and 'female' Ragas, in South, hardly remains in theory even.

A laudable attempt was made by a large group of enlightened connoisseurs and artists in mid-fifties, under the guidance of Shri B.V. Keskar (at the time the Hon'ble Minister for Information and Broadcasting) and under the auspices of the All India Radio, through a symposium to rationalise the apparently anachronistic time and seasonal associations of Ragas of the Hindustani Music. This symposium left no tangible impact on the music in vogue. Old and established orders indeed take time to yield place to new ones.

Difference in Approach

Various reasons can be ascribed for this difference in the Northern and Southern approaches but the primary one is the attitude, both aesthetic and psychological that these two methods of music have in their approach to 'Sangeet' (*Nritam Geetam cha Vadyam cha Trayam Sangeetham Uchyathe*) as defined by the Sages. While it is more or less a matter of conjecture as to when and under what environments and circumstances and over how long a period the music as practised in the North divorced itself from the more orthodox and conservative system, in matters of presentation and purpose, it could reasonably be concluded that the advent of Islamic influence in the North resulted in the adaptation - even by processes of simplifications, permutations

and combinations of Music for the sensual satisfaction. In the process, the overriding spiritual consideration and involvement of 'Sangeet Saadhanam' as a mode of dedication to the Divine was pathetically lost in the North while even to this day this attitude is very much present in the South. I am fully aware of the "*Desheeya*" and the "*Margeeya*" Sangeet of the North. The modern Rasika can well judge for himself how much preference is being normally given to the more spiritual "*Margeeya*" path!

Let us remind ourselves that the ancient treatises on music nowhere mention about the association of parts of a day or seasons with specified Ragas. Also remember that the Seers and Sages of yore propounded nothing that was not considered by them as aid for Moksha. So much so that even the most mundane sciences like sex (Kama Sastra) have been dealt with inter alia as aid to realisation of the soul. Precisely with this sense of dedication the South continued the practice of Music with the conviction and spirit that dedicated and pristine pure Music, irrespective of the notes, could transcend time, nay, change the time and the season for the *nonce hro'* its efficacy. Meanwhile the North was busy analysing what Raga could be most effective at a given time or season to bring the best out of a dancer or impart maximum pleasure to a maudlin monarch.

Baani Vs Gharana

The fanatical zeal with which the student in the North sticks to the time concept is only matched by his over-emphasis on the "Gharana" concept. No doubt, what started off initially as something akin and analogous to the "Baani" (presentational mode) in the South, attributed to certain virtuosi and veterans from time to time, was exaggerated to its illogical extreme in the North to create the various Gharanas and the consequent internecine claims and quarrels for

superiority. The Rasikas, here, overlooked the essential fact that the salient traits of the various Gharanas were certain essential aspects of the "perfect in music". While in the North the Gharanas were with passage of time given undue importance, the South contained the 'Baani' concept in its right place. As in the case of the Gharanas, so too in the context of time and season factors, the Northern student was made by stages a strong stickler to the established conventions.

It is a matter of common knowledge that the type of music that normally appeal to one is that which one has been trained to hear from one's childhood. Thus, the African, Red Indian or Mexican music for example might be felt as unmusical for an ear accustomed to Indian music and vice versa. Similarly by the sheer force of convention, dinned into the psychology, the student started looking askance at the melodies which according to him were sung out of the accustomed time or season.

If the association of melodies with time and season is accepted as obligatory, in the modern world, where the connoisseurs with all their pre-occupations and struggle for existence can normally be expected to be free only in evenings and nights to spare time to listen to music, at least 50 to 60 per cent of the existing musical melodies will be extinct. If not immediately at least gradually, for inadequacy of opportunities for their presentation. This will indeed be a colossal disservice done to our Music by an anachronistic system. This will also be inevitable if instead of superior music being made to mould the seasons and time elements by its sheer elegance and creativity, the latter are permitted to dictate the usage or presentation of melodies.

While many votaries of the existing Northern system will indeed meet this statement with raised eyebrows, one need only point out to them some of the acknowledged morning Ragas of the South like Bhoopalam, Bhauri, Malayamarutham, Valaji (the counterparts, so to say, of the Bhairav varieties, Bhatiyar, Kalavati etc., of the North)

which are sung at any time and if sung properly, never fail to create in the Rasikas' mind the freshness and fragrance of the early morning breeze and the pleasure derived in witnessing the rising red-Sun heralded by the conch, cymbals and the chiming bells of the village temple.

Then, why and how did this peculiar concept gain currency? The answer is simple. At all times, music engaged the academic, technical and intellectual interest of only a select few whereas the large masses, who evinced interest by listening without technical depth, could easily be beguiled. A few recent instances will illustrate the point. An illustrious student of Indian Music and the Sacred Vedas and possessor of a few Doctorates propounded the ridiculous theory that the Vedic Mantras were sung in various Ragas like Jaiwanti, Bhairav, Bhairavi by the Vedic Seers and Sages. His views were acclaimed by eminent political leaders and even heads of states who considered themselves erudite in Indian culture and lore. All of them including the "Vedic Scholar" forgot that the Vedas are the only unique literature which have been preserved perfectly in regard to intonation and recitation. Except for the Udatta, Anudatta and Swarita and Hrasva, Deergha and Pluta, the Mantras do not admit of any musical manipulations. Again, this scholar endeavoured to derive the name of Jaiwanti from the supposition that the Devi on accomplishing the destruction of Mahishasura was praised by Devas by singing "Jaya Jaya Jaya Jaya Jaya Ambe!" in this Raga and hence the name "Jayajayavanti". A pity, that he knew not that the correct original name of this melody was 'Dwijavanti' according to which his exercise in imagination is futile! The votaries of time element are mere sticklers to customs and conventions, which got established by their acceptance by masses, just as some of the foregoing meaningless propounding could gain acceptance.

The argument has been put forward that the Ragas, if divided according to the Prahars of the day and analysed with reference to their constituent Swaras, will reveal that the adherents to time commence in the first Prahar with Ragas

which have "Komal" notes predominant in them and gradually, with the advance of the Prahars, switch over to Ragas having preponderance of Sudha and Tivra notes. This pattern, it may be contended, is based on the fact that the mobility of human limbs and the vocal facility gradually increases from the minimum point at the time of awakening from sleep to the time of retiring at night. However this argument may fail to click since physical or vocal exertion to such extents over long hours may not be required to warm up the vocal chords for higher reaches. Indeed many of the Ragas attributed to the first half of the day have predominantly Mandra and Madhya Sancharas while the evening and night Ragas could be, by and large, considered to have comparatively larger Thara Sancharas.

In conclusion, unlike any other Nation of the world, Bharat has always considered classical music as Nada Upasana (worship of the Almighty through sound). Nada in its pristine purity should transcend time and seasons. To subserviate Nada to the latter will be tantamount to sinning and hence intolerable. If not for this reason, at least considering the fact that the modern facilities and scientific advancement like air-conditioning can drastically change the time and season to temporarily usher in the desired seasonal and time effects and mindful of the fact that broadcasting and cinema-media have already effected a break-through for music from the conventional limitations under consideration, it is high time that the votaries of time and season did away with such restrictions and endeavoured to achieve the ideal in pure and transcendental Music.

- Courtesy : "Sur Singar Souvenir"

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A Report

"CREATE MUSIC NOT NOISE, HARMONY NOT CACOPHONY"

"Kritis are vehicles for the projection of a Raga and do not believe it if anyone says that they are instruments for creating or nurturing Bhakti. The Vaggeyakaras, the Trinity in particular, were no doubt motivated by devotion to Gods and their compositions are all full of Bhakti. But if they wanted to project only Bhakti they would have sung Bhajans. The fact that Tyagaraja developed the Kriti format, introduced Sangatis and other embellishments prove that the focus was on the art form of music," declared Dr. N. Pattabhi Raman, Editor-in-Chief SRUTI magazine. He was addressing a gathering of musicians, Rasikas and students at Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha, Mumbai, a few months back.

According to him this labelling of Karnataka music as divine and building myths around composers has taken away the attention from music per se and has resulted in our losing sight of the greatest contributions made by various composers. The SRUTI Editor-in-Chief was speaking on 'What he expects from young musicians' performance'.

"As a performer you should provide the listener an elevating experience through your art - the word used here is Ananda (Bliss). A very difficult concept to understand sometimes. But it is not mysticism - it is creating awareness of beauty through art", stated Dr. Pattabhi Raman.

In his speech Dr. Pattabhi Raman traced the history and evolution of Kutcheri Paddhati and recalled performances of stalwarts like Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer and Madurai Mani Iyer who attempted to attract audience without compromising on the integrity of music.

"In the 1960s most of them disappeared from the scenario. A new group of young musicians and a different set of Rasikas have emerged who do not have a healthy attitude towards the past. They are establishing new trends," he added

He conceded that times were very difficult for the upcoming young musicians due to changed audience taste and Sabha's attitude. But he asserted that there was no contradiction between good music and appealing music.

It is not necessary to have gimmicks to make our music appealing. Several masters have demonstrated in the past that music can be good and appealing," he revealed

While advising young musicians not to perform on a concert platform without being fully equipped, he stressed the importance of voice culture and the need to have the right blend of Laya and melody.

"Do not flaunt Laya. And do not misuse the Gamakas. They should be used in right proportion like spice and salt to project a Raga in its true form. A scale is only a skeleton. Build the Jiva into it by listening and learning from various compositions of Vaggeyakaras. Finally make music not noise, create harmony not cacophony" concluded Dr. Pattabhi Raman.

Born into a family of rich cultural heritage, Dr. Pattabhi Raman acquired a doctorate in economics and moved to the States. He served as an Assistant Director at the India Consulate in New York and as Director to United Nations Development Programme. He returned to India in 1980 and launched SRUTHI, a magazine devoted to Indian Classical music and dance in 1983.

- Janaki Krishnamoorthy



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(Dhanur Lagnam)

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Lord Shanmukha

by students of

Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya

and

Screening of

"Arupadai Veedu"

A

Documentary of Films Division

SAHITYA IN KARNATAK MUSIC

By R. Ganesan

Sahityas are available in thousands in Karnatak music. There are compositions by those who cannot themselves sing but who have a good knowledge of music. There are others who can compose as well as sing. These are called Vaggeyakars which means that they are proficient in both Vak (words or Sahitya) and Geya (singing). There is yet another category of persons who in order to reach the great heights of Swanubhav transcending the ordinary level of simple pleasure-seeking, take their music to spiritual levels for self-realisation. To them, music becomes an Upasana or worship leading them to ecstatic heights of great joy and enlightenment. Their compositions are mystical in nature and contain the essence of their spiritual experiences. These are therefore called divine works.

In Karnatak Music, there are hundreds of such divine compositions which have to be handled with great care and reverence. Sahitya Bhava becomes extremely important here. To bring out the Sahitya Bhava it is necessary to know the meaning of these compositions to the best of our ability. The singer or the teacher may not himself or herself be proficient in languages, poetry, philosophy, etc., but he or she should make it a point to consult books as well as scholars in this regard. There should be a constant endeavour to know more and more about Sahityas. The immediate benefit of such an endeavour will be that one could sing with greater involvement and confidence in the presence of others. Secondly, the quality of such music will be far superior. Thirdly, of course, in due course, the singer will see that he has to please no one, which is precious freedom, rare to get in ordinary life.

"Give me the strength to rise above daily trifles" says Ravindranath Tagore in his *Gitanjali*. Enlightened singing with a preponderance of Sahitya Bhava will certainly give us this strength. One could, at this stage and if one so chooses, completely do away with listeners and keep singing to oneself. This is great experience which is

sure to give us a taste, even if momentarily, or the divinity in music. Such a music will also greatly attract the listeners and the magic of divine fervour will spread to them also.

Music by itself has a natural charm attracting not only the human kind but also the animals. But the music of the one who is totally immersed in the Sahitya Bhava of these divine compositions gives to all not an ordinary pleasure as derived from, say, a cup of coffee or some sweet dish, but a joy that gives peace and equilibrium of mind. Constant exposure to such a music will eventually lead one to greater peace, joy and even spirituality, depending on the keenness of the aspirant.

It is our great good fortune that in Karnatak Music we have hundreds and hundreds of divine compositions, which are not 'composed' merely with an eye for form, music, rhythm and other technical nuances. They are the outpourings of noble, compassionate and inspired hearts who lived not in their bodies but in their souls. Their compositions are "pasyantivak" seeing intelligence - and therefore have the potency of Mantras, which if properly understood, will bestow the greatest of boons to the singer as well as the listener.

We tend to talk about 'mantras' and 'boons' as a matter of habit and rather loosely. However, they are a reality with two categories of people: the-not-so-well informed faithful and the all-knowing wiseman or Jnani. They understand the potency of these mantras and boons from their own personal experiences, the former by faith and the latter by inquiry. It is the middle-level category who are neither here nor there, and are hopelessly half-baked, who act more royal than the king. They are habitual dissectors and end up as destroyers. They are more concerned about the external mechanical technicalities and efficiencies and they never aspire to get into the heart of the matter. This is because of their sheer inability to



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Programme

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Mridangam

Padmashree Dr. Smt. N. Rajam

Hindustani Violin

Shri Mukesh Jadav

Tabla

1997-98 Music Competition Prize Distribution and Scholarship Awards

Prizes to the winners of the music competition conducted last year (1997-98) and scholarship awards will be given away at the hands of Prof. T. N. Krishnan, Dr. N. Rajam and Shri T.K. Murthy on Saturday the 12th December 1998 at 5.00 p.m. at Shanmukhananda Hall.

Sunday - 13th December, 1998 - 6.00 p.m.

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Sangeetha Kalanidhi Shri T.K. Murthy

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The annual celebration of Vaggeyakara Days has been the forte of the Shanmukhananda Sabha since inception. The celebration, marked by musical homage to the Bards, provides a wonderful and prestigious platform for young, aspiring and upcoming talent.

Programmes for 1998-1999 are given below :

20-12-98	Sunday	6.00 to 9.00 p.m.	Mahakavi Subramania Bharatiyar Day Bharatiyaranjali by Students of Nrithya Geethanjali, Mulund Fine Arts Music School and Artistes of Nrityodaya, Mumbai.
27-12-98	Sunday	6.00 to 9.00 p.m.	Maharaja Swati Tirunal Day
6-1-99	Wednesday	8.30 A.m.	152nd Saint Tyagaraja Aradhana. Rendering of Pancharatna Kritis by Vidwans, Vidhushis, Students and Teachers of Sangeetha Vidyalaya Sangeethanjali to the Saint
7-1-99	Thursday	7.00 - 9.00 p.m.	Sangeethanjali to Saint Tyagaraja
31-1-99	Sunday	6.00 - 9.00 p.m.	Syama Sastri Day
13-2-99	Saturday	6.00 - 9.00 p.m.	Purandara Dasa Day - "Purandara Dasa Prabhavam" (An Anjali to the Sangeetha Pitamaha through his Bhakti facets from Bhajana Sampradaya to Rakiti Sangeet) By Smt. Mangalam Krishnamoorthy & Party
20-2-99	Saturday	6.00 - 9.00 p.m.	Papanasam Sivan Day
21-2-99	Sunday	6.00 - 9.00 p.m.	Annamacharya Day - Harikatha By Smt. Gowri Rajagopal of Chennai
28-3-99	Sunday	6.00 - 8.30 p.m.	Pt. Vishnu Digambar Paluskar & Pt. Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande Days Sangeethanjali by Dr. Vandana Katti & Party

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do so, blocked as they are by their all-powerful egos. They, however, cleverly manage to hype and market their ignorance with labels of erudition and what they ingeniously prefer to call Art music. Beware of such distractors and listen only to the prescriptions of the great composers, some of whom are seers and Mahanubhavas. Saint Tyagaraja's exclusive Kritis on Sangeetha Sastra contain everything about music.

Simply put, the Sahityas in Karnatak music contain all the clues to lift oneself far above

daily trifles. They contain both the pleasurable aspects of music and the ennobling teachings of our scriptures. They also contain mythology, culture and poetry. Above all, they give you the necessary tips for taking the easy path of Bhakti Yoga towards self-realisation, which is said to be a state of peace, joy and enlightenment. And what is more, a single man's experience of ennobling joy spreads to others just as "one lamp lights another nor grows less, so nobleness enkindleth nobleness".

-Courtesy "Souvenir of Vashi Fine Arts"

The Musical Soul

Music, in its essence is the art which depends, more than every other art, on the senses. The naive error of the harmonic theory (which, besides, was not exactly formulated before 1722) was to confound the means and the aim and to take the means for the aim.

Music is the art which is most intimately based upon the senses : that is true, but the aim of music, as an art is, I think, not the expression of the senses, but the expression of the soul, (If we wish to employ these convenient dualistic terms). Otherwise we can say, it is not the primitiveness, but the complexity of the soul which creates the musical art.

The more or less primitive emotions find more perfect manifestations than music. Musical art proves its full power only if music is the entertainment of the soul, cleared from the influence of the outer world, of the soul with itself. "A soul which is so complex that nothing in the world can satisfy besides itself, that is the musical soul, that is the source of music".....

More than every other art, music embraces the whole scale of human emotions, from the simplest to the most refined, from the enjoyment of the ear unto the cries of the soul, which shatters the nerves, and gives pain to the European ear.

- Alfred Westharp - (Music Mirror)



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- | | |
|---|--|
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| 2. Kuchipudi Solo Recital | By Dr. Jonnalagadda Anuradha -
Reader, Dept. of Dance,
University of Hyderabad
Birla's Sangeetha Kalakendra Awardee |
| 3. Dance Drama
"Ksheera Sagara Madhanam" | By Guru Padmabhushan Dr. Vempati
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AN EVENING WITH HIS HOLINESS SRIMAD ANDAVAN SWAMY
 SRI RANGA RAMANUJA MAHADESIKAN
 The Acharya of Srirangam Periashramam 20-1-1999 - 3.30 p.m.

Programme

Reverential Suswagatham with Poornakumbham
 Welcome Address by the President of the Sabha Dr. V Subramanian
 Dolai Utsav to Lord Venugopalan with Musical Homage
 by the Students of Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya
 and
 Anugraha Bhashanam by HIS HOLINESS
 All are welcome to be the Recipients of the Acharya's Blessings.

FEBRUARY & MARCH PROGRAMMES FOR MEMBERS & INVITEES ONLY

February 14	Shri Maharajapuram S. Ramachandran	-	Vocal
Sunday	Shri M.A. Sundareswaran	-	Violin
6.00 p.m.	Shri Vellore Ramabhadran	-	Mridangam
	Shri V. Nagarajan	-	Kanjira
March 20	Smt. Sudha Raghunathan & Party	-	Vocal
Saturday 6.00 p.m.			

Sabha's WEBSITE will be inaugurated just before the
 commencement of Kuchipudi Dance Fete on January 24, 1999

S.Seshadri
 V. Rangaraj
 Hon. Secretaries

Eastern Influence on Western Music

by Victor Paranjoti

The slightly incorrect but frequently uttered statement that the Western looks at music vertically (Harmony) while the Eastern regards music horizontally (Melody) has also made some adherents of one or the other school believe that contact in the past could not have existed, and that real contact in the present or in the future is unlikely. It is true that to-day, in the West Music is conceived largely in terms of harmony while in the East melody is reluctant to share her throne. But this was not always so.

Before the 10th century, there was little difference between the two schools of music. Both of them sprang from the same root, and the common ancestry could readily be traced back. Both were governed by the Pythagorean scale, and both had imbibed elements from early Greek and Syrian music.

There were, however, two main and vital differences. The music of the West lacked delicacy in melodic outline. Tenth century Middle Eastern music possessed both. These gifts the Arabs were to give to the West, and these gifts had given to European music much of its present beauty.

Semitic Music (13th Century)

Arabian music had derived both its theory and practice from ancient Semitic sources. And Semitic music itself was founded, or had been largely influenced by earlier Greek music as practised by Persian and Byzantine musicians.

Early in the history of Islamic Arabia, we find that menstrual music had been invented and adopted. This type of music was called Ique (Rhythm). At this time the theory of Arabian music was founded on the ancient Pythagorean scale enriched by Byzantine and Persian usage.

At times, Persian and Byzantine tendencies to over-decorativeness in Melodic outline tended to obscure the purity of the ancient Greek scale, and it was found necessary periodically to recast the theory.

But by the 10th century there were readily cognizable differences between the Byzantine, Persian and Arabic systems of music. In the 11th century the Arabs accepted and introduced strong Persian and Kharsasnian colour into their music. In the 13th century Abd al-Mu'min introduced a new theory of music into the country, and before the 14th century was out, the quarter tone scale had found its way into Arabic music, and through into Persian and Byzantine music.

East and West Part (15th Century)

The cleavage between Eastern and Western music had begun. Even in early history the professional musician had been held in high esteem in Arabia, and it is doubtful if any nation in the world can claim to have nurtured the arts and sciences as the Arabs did in early Islamic days. They encouraged the growth of music and encouraged it in no uncertain manner.

The Arab's liquid language and his love of poetry perhaps led him to instrumental music. The music itself was 'homophonous' but was rich in ornamentation and graces.

Instrumental accompaniments were played on the Lute, Tanpur, Flute etc., while the rhythm was marked by the drum and tamborine. A notable practice was the Tarkib' or compound, the striking of a note in the melody simultaneously with its fourth, fifth or octave. Military music played on the horn, clarion, reed-pipe and trumpet, with rhythm from drums and kettledrums, cymbals and castenets, seems to have been an

integral part of military parades etc. In fact, the size of the military band attached to an Arab military leader was frequently a fairly accurate indication of his rank.

Middle East Instruments

A great variety of instruments was in use in the Middle East and though many have not survived, some have found a place in Western music, while others are amongst the most important members of the Eastern musical family. The Al-ud (Lute), and Murabba, later known as the Guitara (Guitar) passed into European music, and it is possible the Rebab was, perhaps, instrumental in the development of the bowed instruments of the West. The exact position of the Arab Urghanun (Pneumatic organ) in relation to the European Grand or Pipe organ is obscure, but it must be remembered that the origin of the modern organ was perhaps Jewish Greek. By the 11th century, the only notable organ builders in the world were Bayyasi and Abdul Mazid, both Arabs.

Some form of musical notation had existed as far back as the later part of the 8th Century, but most musicians learnt their music by ear. In spite of this, the amount of early Middle Eastern literature on music that is available is astonishing. Amongst the best known are the *Greek Book of Songs* (Al-Isfahani), *Meadows of Gold* (Al. Masudi), *The Index* (Mohammed Ibn Ishaqal-Warq) and *The Unique Necklace* (Ibn'add-Ra-bbihi). The most notable of Arabia's books on music were written before the fall of Baghdad (1258 A.D.). With these and with the help of the translations of the works of Grecian musician-scientists, philosophers, the Arabs standardised their knowledge not only of music but of the physical basis of music, and on this latter aspect of music, there are many Arabian books in archives. And the Arabs improved on what they learnt from the Greeks as they did in Mathematics, Astronomy and Chemistry.

The world owes a great deal to Arabia and to Middle East generally but Western music's

I. O. U. to Arab music tends to be forgotten. Persia, Turkey and India have also drawn freely on Arabian music's bank-balance, and have not always acknowledged their indebtedness.

The contact of Western music with Arabian music was established through books and also through practising musicians, Constantine the African (C 1075) and Gundisalvus (C.1140) made free use of the writings of Al-Farabi in his chapter on music in his *Opus Tertium*. Ibu Sinha is another Arab whose writings on music have been drawn upon freely by Western Theorists.

Middle East's Influence on West

The influence of Middle Eastern culture on the West, through the Moors of Spain, is by no means negligible. And that many Westerners did study in Middle East institutions is apparent from the reactions of Roger Bacon who, when lecturing to Spanish-students, was surprised to find that they had studied Eastern culture in Eastern languages and, therefore, had an advantage over him. Along with these sources of influence, the fact that the idea of a music governed by rhythms was borrowed from the Arabs is incontrovertible. *Cantus Mensuralis* or music in rhythm was unknown in the West before Franco of Cologne, while the Arab Al-Kindi had written a treatise on the subject over three centuries earlier.

The musical ideas of the Middle Eastern countries were also carried into Western lands by minstrels and strolling players. Some believe that the artistic ancestors of to-day's Morris Dancers were the old Moorish dancers, and many Spanish and Portuguese words concerning music are Arabic in origin.

The Lute, Rebec and Guitar passed from Arabia into the West. But the temporary influence of Eastern musical instruments now not in use in the West cannot altogether be denied. It must be remembered that in early days, as against the wealth of musical instruments in use in the Middle East countries, Europe was restricted mainly to the

harp and Cithara in the family of stringed instruments. The Arabs flooded Europe with their musical instruments and also introduced the fretted keyboard into the West. In all probability, the present Western Major Scale was standardised as a direct result of the introduction of the Western Arab fretted keyboards. Notable Indian fretted keyboard instruments are the Veena, Esraj and Sitar. The last is pure Arab and the full measure of the influence of Middle Eastern music on the music of Northern India is yet to be realised.

Arab's Ornamental 'Graces'

It is to the Arabs that Western music owes its ornamental 'Graces' as the Western Decorative arts owe their 'arabesques' to the same source. It is not at all improbable that the ancient Arab use of the Tarkib or simultaneous striking of a note with its 4th, 5th or octave, the most common forms of European consonances to this

day laid the foundations of European harmony. We know of the trade contacts between India and Europe but little is known of musical influence one way or the other. The purest form of Indian music the Kamatic, appears to be almost totally unconnected with the Middle Eastern steam of music. But this merely means that the two are cousins who agreed to go different ways. That the European musicians are not always unconscious of their debt to Eastern influence is apparent in some of the compositions of Rubinstein, Saint Saens and Rimsky Korsakov among others. That there will be an ultimate fusion of the music of the East and the West is undeniable and when such a fusion takes place, the ancient musical inheritances of the East will find due acknowledgement in the compositions for World Ears that will surely be written by Eastern composers.

Courtesy : "Music Mirror"

SRI SHANMUKHANANDA FINE ARTS & SANGEETHA SABHA (REGD.)

292, Comrade Harbanslal Marg, Sion East, Mumbai - 400 022.

Phones : 407 88 88 / 409 22 44 Fax : 409 22 11 E-Mail : shanmugananda@hotmail.com

RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP AGAINST PAYMENT OF ARREARS

It is noticed from our books that there are quite a few Members of the Sabha who have not renewed their membership against payment of arrears of subscription despite the fact that already nine months have elapsed since 1st April 1998.

Such members are informed that if the payment is not made by 31st March 1999, which is the year closing, their membership will have to be cancelled as per rules and regulations of the Sabha. This may be noted and immediate action taken for renewal of membership as fresh membership will entail a payment of Rs. 1000/- as entrance fee in addition to the Annual membership fee and deposit as per rules.

S. Seshadri
V. Rangaraj

Hon. Secretaries

27-12-1998

"Nadaloludai Not Sanmanaloludai"

"Alapana in notation?" I almost screamed. "Why not?" he coolly countered. "Why not, if you have a thorough Swaragnana, its nuances, Gamaka variations, microtonal finesse and a thorough knowledge of the Raga?"

"There is nothing wrong in putting down everything in writing - phrases to begin with as guidelines provided it is thoroughly 'Gamak'ed, each Bhava, each nuance to the minutest microtone noted in symbols, devised as per one's own imagination."

"Can microtones be marked?"

"Sure, You can have your own symbols, signs which you can decipher anytime."

"There is no common symbology. One has to devise one's own methodology", he says.

It is a bit intriguing. "If one can notate Raga Alapana, sequence by sequence, stage by stage, one should be a master-musician. In which case one can as well extemporise. Which is what it is meant to be-a Manodharma facet. Why all this 'Kalpita' exercise?" I ask.

"Well, Yes, a thorough-bred musician needs no such exercise or props. But what about half-baked ones - those who snatch a phrase from here and borrow a design from there and not having an insight into the Raga, just plunge into an Alapana? Would it not be a good exercise for them to make a written essay of this? This would not only sharpen their knowledge of Swarasthanas but also quicken their grasp of musical sensitivity.... Of course", he pauses and continues with a note of caution, "much depends on the training one receives, the training in fundamentals, the grind one goes through in learning and listening, for Gamaka-graces, microtones and nuances are things one has to grasp more from listening and inculcate. All these imply that one has to have inborn talent, and be lucky to have for a Guru a 'Swaragnani'."

That was the late Voleti Venkateswaralu, a 'Swaragnani', himself, why a Sangeetha Yogi, in one of his conversational moods. Our meeting in Bombay when he came to receive the Sangeet Natak Academy award, started on an informal note and got into a serious discussion when the writer touched upon the delicate issue of teaching the lines of Swaras before teaching the lines of Sahitya. As an ardent listener - learner of his "Sangeetha Sikshana" (music lesson) broadcast from AIR, Vijayawada during the 'fifties, the writer had noticed that his methodology differed from what was usually followed. More of Swara phrasings than of Sahitya scanning marked the methodology.

"In fact", he continued the conversation with a sparkle in his eye, "I learnt that way and that helped me a lot in more ways than one. Not only in Alapana but in finding a style of my own. Oh! all these I have explained in an interview to *SRUTI*, he abruptly put a stop. I got my hint. He was a man of few words, would sing more than speak.

The Grind

True, his 'grind' for ten years in the fundamentals at the feet of Munuganti Venkatarao Pantulu at Sreerama Samajam, a music institution at Kakinada, helped him blossom into a fine musician. A strict disciplinarian, Venkatarao drilled into his students the 12 Swarasthanas, to begin with. The exercise then switched over to a Raga, the Swaras of which formed a graded exercise of symmetrical phrases of note - combinations.

A comprehensive exercise covering a three octave range. It comprised all that went into the Raga, including the microtonal minutiae. Then followed the 'Akaara Sadhaka'. This continued nearly for a year. Once the students had learnt a few Ragas and compositions, they were made to listen and notate themselves.

Though such a method came for criticism, Voleti found it immensely useful. He had gone on record saying that following an earnest advice of Dr. S. Pinakapani, a medico-musician who has groomed many frontliners of Andhra Pradesh, he had collected a lot of 'material' on a Raga, a Swaraprasthas or Niraval from various sources, singers and recitals and compared them with his own singing. "It is a very useful reference manual", he said. Analysing and assimilating the 'pick' of it, "I could improve my own knowledge and skills".

Voleti strongly recommended this method for training. Once the Swara-sense was absorbed in student's system it would be much easier to learn songs and sing with an ease, he emphatically said.

Voleti was one of the very few musicians to whom music was "Atma Nivedhana". So detached was he that whether it was a packed house or a sprinkling 'heads', here and there, a broadcast or a practising session, whether there was thunderous applause or silent appreciation, it was all the same for him. Unassuming and uninhibited, once Voleti commenced to sing, he entered the realm of melody. It was total surrender to the Muse. What flowed was music of Sukhabhava, a stream of melody with ripples of resonance, gyrating through modes magnificent and mellifluous - all in a soulful mould touching the heart. The shimmering resonance in his voice, its dynamic force and vitality, the purity of pitch and the effortless ease with which he sang, brought about a blend of form and feeling. There was no exertion, no gesticulation, no external, reflection of his inner musical impulse or inspiration. and that was often mistaken for indifference. But his musical eloquence was such that one could not distinguish between the technical, virtuosic skill from the inspired aesthetic effulgence. So finely fused were they. His rendition of Kritis, Slokas, even Tukkadas, often reminded one of a Bhakta's fervent yearning fused with concert technique. Even Swaraprasthas carried this devotional aura.

Voleti had great fascination for Hindustani music. Their slow-paced, meandering Vilamba Kala, their structuring from note-to-note in detail,

their ease and felicity with the pitch, their way of using 'Vivadi Swaras' - all had fascinated him. His Pantuvarali would take him on a Sruti bheda spree and he would blend it with Bol-Taana- fashioned Akara passages. No inhibition for adopting what was musically aesthetic and pleasing. But when delineating 'uniquely' Karnataka Ragas such as Todi, Ananda Bhairavi, Kambhoji, Sankarabharanam or Bhairavi he was firmly rooted in Karnataka idiom. No blends for they were uniquely 'Carnatic'.

As a teacher, he excelled. He had thousands of 'Sishyas' along the length and breadth of the country through his "Sangeetha Sikshana" session. While it had enriched the repertoire of some and whetted the appetite of others, it had also quenched the thirst of a few, who had no way of direct musical training! He had popularised through "Bhakti Ranjani" many rare compositions and devotional hymns. Adhyatma Ramayana Keertanas, Annamacharya's Sankeertanas, were some of the treasure he handed down to the younger generation.

Voleti had no complaints against the talents of today. Unlike many who bemoaned a fall in classical music, he felt a change was taking place in musical scene. New Ragas were emerging, new compositions were composed. If they sustained the test of time they would automatically form part of the traditional repertoire. Similarly, the young talents of today, he said, had capacity to reach greater heights as they had exposure to many varieties of music and opportunities to learn, listen and interact. Their intelligence was sharper too. Perhaps what they lacked was the inclination to devote all their life and resources to music. "But could we blame them for this lack of total dedication when their life is one stretch of struggle, right from the start till they got a foothold?"

"We are not Tyagaraja or Dikshitar to immerse ourselves in music throughout. We have to earn our bread. However, the highest happiness is not difficult if we train our mind to get attuned to arts and practise it. Problems of everyday are bound to be there; but they could be got over if

one restricted one's needs to minimum and sincerely believed that "Nadaloludai is Brahmanandam and not Sanmanaloludai".

And Voleti had practised what he preached. His career in AIR was an example. He joined AIR Vijayawada in 1951 as a casual artiste whose contract was renewed every month, to begin with, for some time, then every quarterly to be followed by renewal every three years until 1964 when he was absorbed in a permanent cadre! And he had relatively restricted the number of performances during service. For one thing, his job at AIR left him little time, for another, he felt he would not be doing justice if he gave too

many public performances, Public Cutcheries, he said, gave him "Atma Tripti" (self - satisfaction) as there was direct rapport with audience and he did not want to lose his values about giving his best.

Voleti had no inhibitions about musical standards - performing, professional or otherwise.

"Many singers are there who excel performing professionals though they may not have ever got on to stage to perform. There are some who can enthral with wholesome music without any accompanying props. But, surprisingly, such singers have their vocations elsewhere!

Golden words!

- Kinnari

APPEAL

Four Volumes in the "GARLAND" series titled **A Garland, Another Garland, Yet Another Garland & The Fragrant Garland** are before the music-loving public. Readers of SHANMUKHA would have perused the gracious reviews of the books by the Editor. It is my desire to wind up the 'GARLAND' series of Biographical Dictionary of Carnatic composers, Musicians with the fifth and the last of the series. I shall be grateful if Vidwans and Vidushis of standing and musicologists help with full-bio-data, special comments, anecdotes and achievements and join the non-commercial *Yagna*. Those whose lives had been included already may peruse the contents in the four books & suggest additions worthy of being passed on to music-loving public & posterity.

'GARLAND' Rajagopalan

CARNATIC CLASSICALS

3, 24th Cross Street
Indira Nagar
Chennai-600 020
Phone : 441 71 96

SRI SHANMUKHANANDA FINE ARTS

&

SANGEETHA SABHA (REGD.)

292, Comrade Harbanslal Marg
Mumbai-400 022.

Phones : 407 88 88 / 409 22 11 / 409 22 44

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